From

AUSTRALIAN CHESS 2003-2007:

all

"PROBLEM BILLABONG"

columns -

devoted to CHESS COMPOSITION

Edited by Dr Ian Shanahan

FOREWORD

This 'electronic edition' of the PROBLEM BILLABONG columns, though definitive, is not quite a *verbatim* reproduction of those that appeared in print within the *Australian Chess* magazine itself: here, every quoted problem is given a diagram, whereas unsound submissions are not; and improved versions of compositions initially published therein do tend to receive greater prominence here, their accompanying remarks being adapted accordingly. Otherwise, within the text that follows, any errors have been silently corrected – I do hope that I have ferreted them all out! – and, very occasionally, I have added some further brief commentary concerning salient thematic content demonstrated by certain positions. Formatting has also been radically modified and rendered uniform, all problems' solutions now appearing directly adjacent to the compositions themselves, with 'figurine notation' being employed throughout. Finally, I have taken the opportunity to improve the verbal expression wherever I felt this might prove beneficial; such editorial intervention has not always been signalled by me herein. Yet I have gone to great pains to preserve the PROBLEM BILLABONGs' distinctively Australian 'flavour': readers can be assured that any alterations by me do not at all detract from solvers' already-published responses to the original problems, for example. And to assist researchers, a 'theme index', a classification of problem genres, and a list of all of the participating composers have also been appended to this document. Since one of my objectives in curating the PROBLEM BILLABONG was that it be didactic, perhaps their compilation might even serve as a 'mini-treatise' on the art of the chess problem.

Dr Ian Shanahan, Sydney, 7 June 2008.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, January/February 2003

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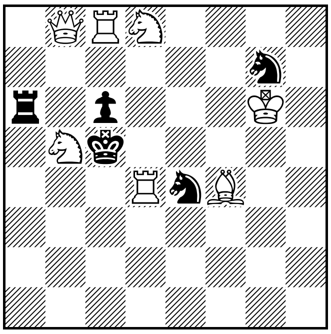
Welcome to the PROBLEM BILLABONG, where lovers of chess can gain sustenance from problem compositions old and new. I'm looking for original chess problems that will appeal particularly to the 'average' chess-player – i.e. mates in 2, 3, etc.; helpmates; proof games; series-movers; and even endgame studies (although I'm no expert in these) – and in each issue, I propose also to analyse thoroughly a quoted problem by an Australian composer in order to edify readers. (More exotic 'fairy' originals will only be considered for publication here if they are *simple*.) Solvers are encouraged to send me commentaries on the original problems with their solutions; I will also start a 'solving ladder' if there is a sufficient numerical response. Now to the problems themselves... We begin by paying tribute to my journalistic predecessor, Arthur Willmott. His **1** is a wonderful problem, quite hard to solve, and is analysed below. Molham Hassan's positions **2** and **6** are effectively his first published problems! A resident of Canberra, the obviously talented Molham collaborates in **5** with that stalwart of Australian problemdom, Denis Saunders. The 'Wizard of Oz' himself contributes a typically tricky 2er in **3**: which arrival square for the key-piece is correct? My own **4** is none too easy either: what is the significance of that arrangement on the d-file? Solutions [below].

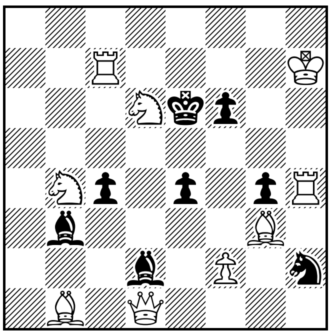
1. **Arthur Willmott**: *British Chess Magazine*, July 1988



≠2 [set play, 2 tries]

1 is a *complete block*: if Black were to move, every Black move already has a White mate set for it: 1...♜~a 2.♖×c6≠; 1...♜b6 (*self-blocking* the ♚) 2.♕e5≠; 1...♞e~ 2.♗d6≠; 1...♞g~ 2.♘e6≠. But White must plan very carefully. In the *tries* **1.♗e5?** (zz) or **1.♖c7?** (zz), Black's *refutation* is 1...♜b6!, and mate by 2.♕e5 is now impossible on account of *White self-obstruction*. After a detailed study of this position, one is forced to conclude that a pure waiting move which doesn't disrupt the set-play is unavailable. Instead, White's key is a quiet move which *changes* some of the set mates, **1.♗c7!** (zz) – a beautifully paradoxical key, restricting the ♕ and unpinning the ♟ so that it can capture and give check. Now, White's reply to 1...♜~ is 2.♕(×)b6≠ rather than the set 2.♖×c6; the set mates following the ♞s' moves remain undisturbed by the key. Observe the lovely *added variation* 1...♟×b5+ 2.♗b6≠, which exhibits quite complex strategy: White's closure of the line a6–g6 to parry the check and simultaneously give mate shows a *cross-check*; 2.♗b6≠ also shuts the line b8–b5 (*White interference*), thereby exploiting the ♟'s self-block of his own ♚ at b5. Here, such White self-interference is harmless to White, in contrast to the two tries where White trips over his own feet! So **1** is classed as a *mutate* – a complete block position with a waiting-move key that also alters some of the set mates {ed.}.

2. **Molham Hassan** (Egypt): Original

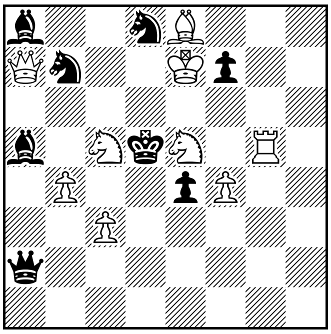


≠2 [1 try]

1.♗×e4? (>2.♗d5, ♗f5) 1...♝c2!
1.♙f4! (>2.♙f5)
1...♚×d6 2.♙f5≠;
1...♟e×f4 *e.p.* 2.♗f5≠;
1...♟g×f4 *e.p.* 2.♖×e4≠;
1...♝×f4 2.♕d5≠;
1...♟f5 2.♖h6≠.

A fine (if rather obvious) sacrificial flight-giving key; and all variations employ *line-openings*, an important unifying factor. Notice that although the mating move after the *flight* 1...♚×d6 is the same as the threat, the mating *positions* and strategic details are distinct {ed.}. Nice variations {Bob Meadley [M]}. Excellent *e.p.* puzzle; I particularly like the way the 4th rank is cleared {Markus Wettstein [W]}.

3. Denis Saunders (Australia): Original



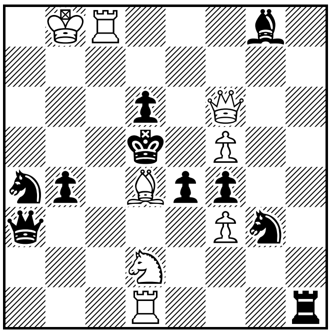
≠2 [set play, 3 tries]

1...♝b6 2.♕×a2≠;
1.♘c~? (>2.♕d4) 1...♝×b4+!
1.♘a6? (>2.♕d4)
1...♝×b4+ 2.♘×b4≠; 1...♝b6! (2.♕×a2?)
1.♘a4? (>2.♕d4)
1...♝b6 2.♘×b6≠; 1...♝×b4+! (2.♘×b4?)

1.♘cd3! (>2.♕d4)
1...♝b6 2.♕×a2≠;
1...♝×b4+ 2.♘×b4≠;
1...♛f2 2.♙c4≠;
1...♛c4 2.♘×f7≠;
1...♞c5 2.♕×c5≠;
1...♞d~ 2.♗(×)c6≠.

Here we see a kind of *White correction* sequence by the ♘c5 (NB: 1.♘a4? does *not* correct the *general error* caused by 1.♘c~? – namely, permitting a check to White by 1...♝×b4). The key is only pseudo-sacrificial since 1...♟×d3 doesn't defeat the threat {ed.}. It looked to me like the key would be made by the ♘c5 {M}. Quite tricky, and a lot of variations {W}. 1.♘cd3! naturally allows another check {Andy Sag [AS]}.

4v. Ian Shanahan (Australia): Original



≠2 [2 tries]

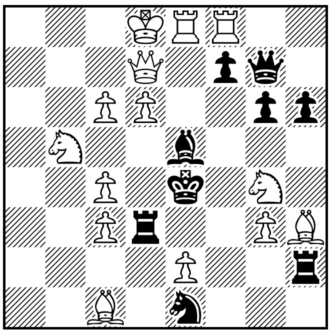
1.♗c5? (>2.♕×d6, ♕d4)
1...♟b3 2.♕d4≠;
1...♜h6 2.♕d4≠;
1...♞×f5 2.♕×f5,♙×e4≠;
1...♟×c5 2.♖d8≠;
1...♞×c5!

1.♘c4? (>2.♕×d6)
1...♟b3 2.♗g1≠;
1...♜h6 2.♗c3≠;
1...♞×f5 2.♕×f5≠;
1...♞c5 2.♘b6≠;
1...♟×f3!

1.♗e5! (>2.♕×d6)
1...♟b3 2.♘f1≠;
1...♜h6 2.♘b3≠;
1...♞×f5 2.♙×e4≠;
1...♟×e5 2.♕d8≠;
1...♝e6 2.♕×e6≠;

The array on the d-file – with tries by alternate pieces thereon – constitutes a *half-battery*, here showing six *changed mates*, after 1...♟b3 and 1...♜h6, between the 1.♗c5?, 1.♘c4?, and 1.♗e5! *phases* (this is known as the *Zagoruiko framework* – albeit in a defective 3×2 form). Across all three phases after 1...♞×f5, one can also discern the *Mäkihovi theme*: in a set- or try-phase, a Black defence allows two White mates (i.e. a *dual*) which are forced singly in further try- or post-key play. Twelve mates in all! {ed.}. A ♖ half-battery, therefore ♗ or ♘ must move; f@$%&#* good problem! {M}. Superb distinction between the discovered check mating moves by the ♘ {W}. Subtle try 1.♘c4? 1...♟×f3!, with nice changed mates in the actual play. It seems clear that one potential firing-piece of the half-battery must provide the key {Denis Saunders}.

5. Molham Hassan & Denis Saunders (Egypt / Australia): Original



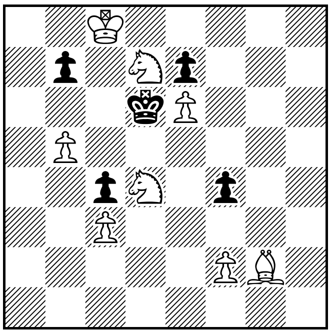
≠2 [1 try]

1.♖×f7? (>2.♖f4)
1...♜f3!

1.♕×f7! (>2.♕f4)
1...♜×d6+ 2.♘×d6≠;
1...♛×f7 2.♖×e5≠;
1...♜f3 2.♕d5≠;
1...♟g5 2.♕f5≠;
1...♜f2,♞g2 2.♘(×)f2≠;
1...♛f6+,♛×f8 2.♘(×)f6≠.

Again, after a sharp try, the key is typical Saunders – sacrificial and allowing a check. Note that several mates here are *pin-mates*, wherein the pin of ♝e5 is crucial; however, such pin-mates are *static*, since this ♝ is already pinned in the diagram position {ed.}. I am not too fond of the key (it reminds me of lightning chess) {W}. The key adds a check – good. Lots of ♙s – not so good {AS}.

6. **Molham Hassan** (Egypt): Original

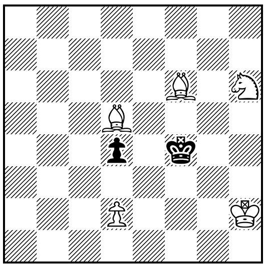


≠4

1.♗f3! (zz)
1...♟b6 2.♗a8! ♟f3 3.♔b7 ♚d5 4.♔c7≠.

This is rather a heavy setting of the *Indian theme*, described by John M. Rice in his encyclopaedic *Chess Wizardry* (1996) as comprising “a white *critical move* [here 2.♗a8, crossing b7], followed by a self-interference on the critical square [3.♔b7] for the purpose of relieving stalemate, and finally a discovered mate”. The Indian manoeuvre is essentially a 3-move theme, and has been demonstrated as such many times in *miniature* (i.e. with 7 units or less), the earliest example I know being **6A**:

6A. **Sam Loyd**: *Saturday Courier*, March 1856 [version by Ian Shanahan]

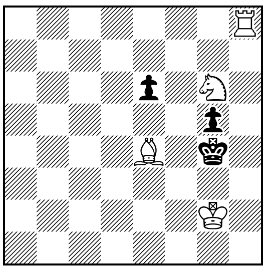


≠3

1.♗h1! (zz)
1...♟d3 2.♔g2! ♚e4 3.♔g3≠.

Below is an orthogonal treatment, **6B** {ed.}:

6B. **Ian Shanahan**: Original(?)



≠3

1.♖f8? (>2.♗f3≠) 1...♚h5!
1.♗c6? (zz)
1...♟e5 2.♗d7≠;
1...♚f5!
1.♖h1! (zz)
1...♟e5 2.♔h2! ♚h5 3.♔g3≠.

I like these types of (Indian?) problems. The extra thrill of **6** is that the way into the corner has first got to be cleared {W}. I don’t usually attempt solving 4ers, but this one looked like it might be a one-liner so I had a go at it {AS}. A nice set of problems, and I do hope other solvers come on board next time {M}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, March/April 2003

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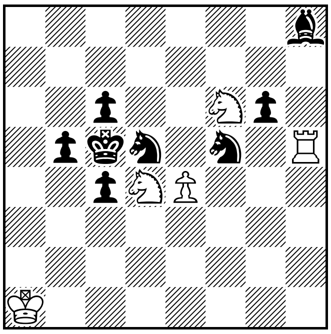
Henceforth for PROBLEM BILLABONG's compositions, I will signal as a solving guide the presence of thematic set-play and/or tries (if any); so I do expect our growing band of solvers to at least make a serious attempt at finding these, together with all of their subsequent variations. Such *virtual play* definitely constitutes part of a problem's 'solution' – and besides, much pleasure is to be gained from the hunt! Anyway, let's start this time with a paradoxical helpmate by a famous local problemist, Peter Wong (co-recipient, with Denis Saunders, of the inaugural Whyatt Medal: congratulations to them both!). For almost all helpmates Black begins and, *cooperating* with White, Black is checkmated; in Peter's **7** White's 2nd move will deliver mate. **7** has two thematically related solutions which I analyse later in this issue. Geoffrey Hilliard's **8** is one of his first published problems – welcome, Geoffrey! – although it was composed over thirty years ago. It shows a venerable theme ornamented by another feature: what? Our BILLABONG is now graced by the presence of a pair of world-renowned two-move experts from overseas, Bob Lincoln and David Shire. David's immaculate **9** parades three delicious themes; Bob's **10** has only one theme, quite difficult, but it is a favourite of mine. Tabulate carefully the mates after each Black move in **10** and you'll see a clear-cut pattern emerging... Solutions [below].

7. **Peter Wong**: *British Chess Magazine*, April 1992



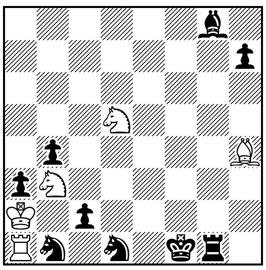
H≠2, 2 solutions

The two solutions of **7** are: **1.♞g7 ♘f5 2.♞b4 ♘d7≠**; and **1.♞c3 ♘d5 2.♞d6 ♘e6≠**.

All four ♘♞s are initially *half-pinned*: if any ♘♞ were to move, it would leave its same-colour counterpart pinned. Often in helpmate 2ers with both Black and White half-pins, Black's 2nd move unpins the now-pinned White piece, which then executes a pin-mate whereby the pin of the remaining Black half-pin unit is strictly necessary.

(We can see this particular pin-unpin string unfurl in my own **7A**:

7A. **Ian Shanahan**: *Chess in Australia*, January 1988, "Horseplay"



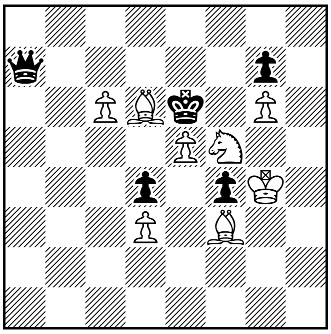
H≠2, 2 solutions

1.♞d2 ♘d4! (♘c1?) **2.♞b3!** (♞c4?) ♘**e3**≠;
1.♞e3 ♘**f4 2.♞d5!** (♞c4?) ♘**d2**≠.

In each of **7A**'s solutions, Black's 2nd move is to that square just vacated by White [a *follow-my-leader* effect due to *dual-avoidance* (2.♞c4?)], and *voilà!*, White's mating move is to that square first moved to by Black in the other solution!)

In Peter Wong's **7** however, there are – paradoxically – *no* pin-mates, the unpinning of both ♘s is *prospective* (this being the sole function of each of Black's *1st* moves), and there is also a follow-my-leader link within each pair of *1st* moves. Yet observe that White's ♖ has no rôle to play in either checkmate; it is merely an obstacle that serves to curtail the facility of Black's compliance – such that annoying *cooks* like 1.♞c3 ♘c2 2.♞d6?? (illegal!) ♘d7≠ are circumvented. The diagram needs the ♟g6 in order to thwart another cook, 1.♞×d4 ♖h6 2.♞b4 ♘d7≠, but it is a pity that the ♗e4's guard of d5 becomes redundant in the 2nd solution. Despite this minor blemish, **7** is certainly a fine problem – as one would always expect from Peter {ed.}.

8. Geoffrey Hilliard (Australia): Original

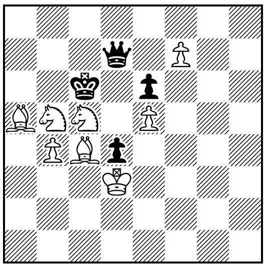


≠2 [1 try]

1.♔×f4? (zz) 1...♛f7!
1.♔h5! (zz)
1...♛~7 2.♘×d4≠;
1...♛b6,♛c5 2.♘×g7≠;
1...♚×f5 2.♗g4≠.

This is a complete block, the first two mates being already set; but a generous flight-giving key yields an *added mate*. **8** demonstrates the age-old *focal theme*, the ♛ focussing precariously on d4 and g7. What elevates this composition beyond mere cliché is the fact that all checkmates here are *models*: with the permissible exception of ♔ and ♙s, every White piece participates somehow in a model mate, each square in the ♚'s field being uniquely guarded or blocked. **8** can be recast more economically as a *Meredith* (i.e. a problem with 8–12 units), **8v**:

8v. Geoffrey Hilliard (version by Ian Shanahan): Original

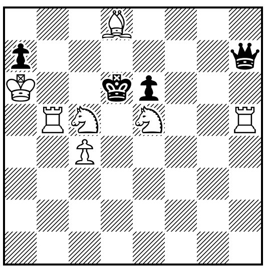


≠2 [2 tries]

1.♗×e6? (>2.♗×d7) 1...♛×e6!
1.♙f8♕? (zz) 1...♛h7+!
1.♗b3! (zz)
1...♛~7 2.♘×d4≠;
1...♛~d 2.♘a7≠;
1...♚×b5 2.♗a4≠.

(There are fewer loose ♛-moves causing duals than in **8**, but **8v** is visually more cramped. Nevertheless, either of these two settings may very well prove to be *totally anticipated* by some almost-identical precursor, unknown to Mr Hilliard or myself.) A delightful locally-produced companion to **8**, *sans* model mates, is **8A**; however, *the* classic focal-play setting, a *mutate* wherein the foci change, is **8B**:

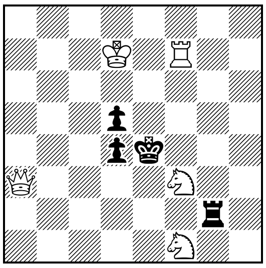
8A. Geoffrey Foster: *British Chess Magazine*, November 1987



≠2 [2 tries]

1.♖a5? (zz) 1...♛b1!
1.♖g5? (zz) 1...♛h1!
1.♖h4! (zz)
1...♛~7 2.♘e4≠;
1...♛~sw 2.♘b7≠;
1...♚×e5 2.♘b7≠.

8B. Comins Mansfield: *Morning Post*, 1923



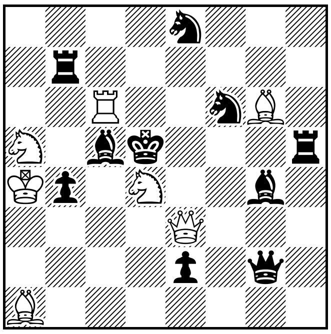
≠2 [set play]

1...♜~g 2.♘1d2≠;
1...♜~2 2.♘g3≠;
1...♟d3 2.♕e7≠;

1.♕a6! (zz)
1...♜~g 2.♕e2≠;
1...♜~2 2.♕g6≠;
1...♟d3 2.♕e6≠.

Sheer genius from the late English grandmaster! {ed.}. The key of **8** gives a flight and a piece. Being a waiter, all duals unfortunately detract {Andy Sag [S]}. Focal theme: the poor overloaded ♛... **8** is OK, but compared to **9** it's like chalk and cheese {Bob Meadley [M]}.

9. David Shire (England): Original



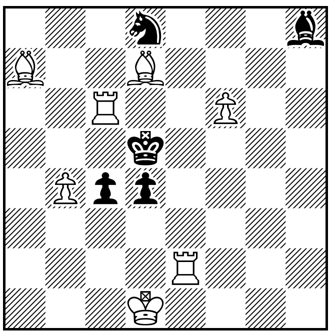
≠2 [1 try]

1.♘f5? (>2.♕e6, ♕e5, ♖×c5)
1...♛e4 2.♕×c5≠;
1...♞e4 2.♕b3≠;
1...♝×e3 2.♘×e3≠;
1...♝d6!

1.♘c2! (>2.♕×c5, ♕b3)
1...♜f5 2.♕e6≠;
1...♝f5 2.♕e5≠;
1...♞d6 2.♖×c5≠;
1...♝d4 2.♕×d4≠;
1...♝×e3 2.♘×e3≠.

First, did you notice that the three threats after 1.♘f5? become mates after 1.♘c2!, while the two post-key threats are also virtual mates? Such multithreat-mate reciprocity is known as the *Odessa theme*. Moreover, the simultaneous cutting-off of both ♝g4 and ♜h5 at f5 by 1.♘f5? (with two ensuing threats on e6 and e5 respectively) constitutes the *Novotny theme*. Finally, after the key, the mutual interference of these same Black pieces at f5 forms a *Grimshaw*. There is a great deal of line-opening and -closure in this marvellously rich and unified problem, the defences on d6 being particularly subtle; it is also an artistic boon that the try is rather more menacing than the key. **9** is much superior to – and sufficiently distinct from – a preliminary version which David published in *The Problemist Supplement* during 1998: I do believe that his **9** has earned its right to an independent existence {ed.}. Key and try both sacrifice the ♕; there is also a Grimshaw, self-block, and other line interferences {S}. A really classy mature 2er, with two lovely Grimshaw variations after the key {M}.

10. Robert Lincoln (U.S.A.): Original

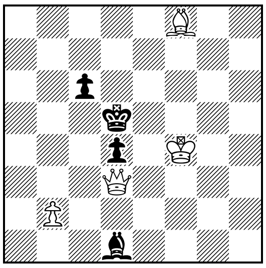


≠2

1.♗b8! (>2.♖c5[X], ♖d6[Y], ♖e5[Z])
1...♝g7 2.♖c5[X], ♖d6[Y], ♖e5[Z]≠;
1...♝×f6 2.♖c5[X], ♖d6[Y]≠;
1...♟c3 2.♖c5[X], ♖e5[Z]≠;
1...♞e6 2.♖d6[Y], ♖e5[Z]≠;
1...♞f7 2.♖c5[X]≠;
1...♟d3 2.♖d6[Y]≠;
1...♞b7 2.♖e5[Z]≠;
1...♞×c6 2.♗e6≠.

Yes, duals – normally a blight – are here transformed into a virtue through being thematized: there are exactly eight legal Black moves furnishing eight variations whose mates filter through all eight combinations of the three threats – *total combinative separation*! Observe that 1...♞×c6 defeats every threat, but makes the mistake of effecting a *self-block* on c6 which permits a new, *elimination*, mate. **10** is a highly creditable Meredith, notwithstanding that on several previous occasions Bob has exhibited this sweet algebraic concept even more economically, simply, and with supreme artistry – as in his **10A**:

10A. Robert Lincoln: 5th Hon. Men. *The Problemist*, 1988



≠2

1.♙b3! (>2.♕c4[X], ♕e4[Y], ♕f5[Z])
1...♝h5 2.♕c4[X], ♕e4[Y], ♕f5[Z]≠;
1...♝g4 2.♕c4[X], ♕e4[Y]≠;
1...♝f3 2.♕c4[X], ♕f5[Z]≠;
1...♝e2 2.♕e4[Y], ♕f5[Z]≠;
1...♝c2 2.♕c4[X]≠;
1...♟c5 2.♕e4[Y]≠;
1...♚e6 2.♕f5[Z]≠;
1...♝×b3 2.♕×b3≠.

(I myself am thoroughly enchanted by the combinative separation pattern because of its aura of completeness and absolute meta-precision; yet relatively few problemists have taken any ongoingly active interest in it since T. R. Dawson's pioneer setting of the idea in 1947. Perhaps most composers – and solvers – just find it too 'mathematical', abstruse, or constructionally challenging?...) {ed.}.

A full set of mutually exclusive combinations of defences and non-defences against the three threats – an unusual departure from conventional problem criteria which would appeal to the mathematically oriented {S}. Not my cup of tea. With due respect, this theme should be f----d and burnt {M}. Hmmm... We'll convert you yet, Mr Meadley! {ed.}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, May/June 2003

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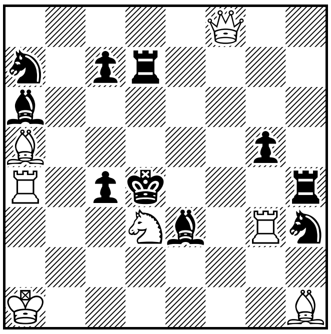
We dive into the PROBLEM BILLABONG this time with **11** – a pretty, tricky 2er by a relatively obscure Australian problemist (active during the 1960s and ’70s) whose compositions deserve to be better known; I dissect it later in this issue. English maestro David Shire returns with **12**, a *task* setting of that theme named after a greatly lauded Italian composer. (Which one?) How are **12**’s thematic mates all related? In Ms Nasai’s **13**, Black plays 14 *consecutive* legal moves – White remains stationary throughout! – to reach a position where White can mate in 1; check may be given only on the final move of the sequence, immediately prior to White’s mating move. Finally, a big welcome to friend Peter Wong, whose **14** falls within one of his favourite genres (usually abbreviated as SPG). **14**’s stipulation means: “Position after White’s 13th move. What was the game?”. Solutions [below].

11. Alex Boudantzev: 3rd Comm. *The Problemist*, 1977-II



≠2 [1 try]

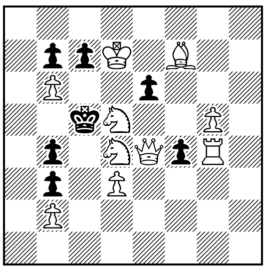
1.♕b4? (>2.♕c3)
1...♚×d3 2.♕d2≠;
1...♝d2 2.♕c5≠;
1...♞b5 2.♕×c4≠;
1...♜e4!

1.♕f3! (>2.♕×e3)
1...♚×d3 2.♕d1≠;
1...♝~(d2) 2.♕f6≠;
1...♝f4!? 2.♕e4≠;
1...♜e7 2.♕d5≠;
1...♜e4 2.♕×e4≠.

Across two phases, one sees the White line-piece theme of ‘doubling’ (or ‘gathering strength’), later dubbed the *Barnes I theme* because it was first publicized in 1968, within the Yugoslav journal *Problem*, by the celebrated English composer IM Barry P. Barnes. In Alex Boudantzev’s **11**, the ♕ – Her Majesty executes both first moves *and* all of the nine mates! – takes advantage of the back-up support from the ♖-♗ combinations in each phase. (While solving this problem, I found it hard to decide which first move was the key – did you? – since the try’s refutation isn’t so easily spotted.) **11**’s sole salient flaw is the unprovided flight-capture 1...♚×d3, for which there is no set mate; further, ♞h3 could just as well be a ♟ – for the ♞ only stops an irrelevant post-key dual should Black play 1...♝f2. Yet savour the changed *concurrent* pin-mates after 1...♚×d3, and the *Black correction* 1...♝f4!? after the key – a nice touch.

Now follows an early example of the Barnes I ‘doubling’ motif by Barry Barnes himself (**11A**), wherein the lone rear-support-piece per phase merely guards a square in the ♚’s *field* once the ♕ moves off each rear-piece’s line, rather than guarding the ♕ herself as she mates by proceeding along the line (as was mostly the case in **11**):

11A. Barry P. Barnes: 4th Prize *The Problemist*, 1965



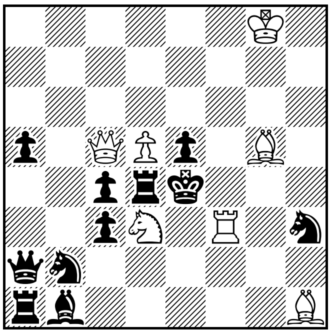
≠2 [1 try]

1.♕×e6? (zz)
1...♚×d4 2.♕e3≠;
1...♟f3 2.♕e7≠;
1...♟×b6 2.♕×b6≠;
1...♟c6!

1.♕×f4! (zz)
1...♚×d5 2.♕f5≠;
1...♟e5 2.♕c1≠;
1...♟×d5 2.♕×c7≠;
1...♟c~ 2.♕d6≠.

11A flaunts a gorgeous, unific *exchange of function* (rôle-reversal) between ♖g4 and ♗f7 across phases: one of these pieces buttresses the ♕ from behind as described above, while the other crucially pins the uncaptured ♟ once the ♚ makes his flight-capture, so that a *pin-mate* ensues. Hence the Prize {ed.}.

12. David Shire (England): Original

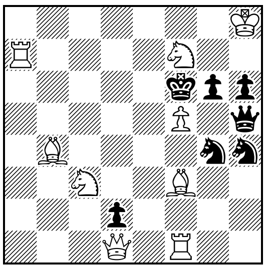


≠2

1.♙d6! (>2.♕×e5)
1...♝×d3 2.♖f1≠;
1...♞×d3 2.♖f2≠;
1...♜×d3 2.♖f4≠;
1...♟×d3+ 2.♖f7≠;
1...♜d5 2.♕e3≠.

The *task* demonstrated here, in the first four variations, is the *Stocchi theme* combined with *battery mates* – a *record* of sorts? (To date, the greatest number of distinct Stocchi variations shown in a 2er, irrespective of mating strategy, is five.) Anyway, the Stocchi is a self-block theme wherein three or more self-blocks *on the same square* (it is often a flight-square for the ♚) lead to mates that are separated through *dual-avoidance*: in **12**, if a 'dummy' unit – devoid of all powers except for blocking – were to capture the ♘d3, then White could mate in a variety of ways by playing the ♖f3 along the f-file; however, once specific Black men actually capture on d3, various defensive effects arise and White's mating-choices evaporate. Unity is supreme in **12** because of the strategic correspondences between Black defences and White mates: in capturing on d3, Black fires his own batteries, only to have them shut off by White's. And even the non-Stocchi variation 1...♜d5 2.♕e3≠ involves a self-block, this being the 'motivic glue' which binds the whole together. David's construction is, as always, impeccable – even if **12**'s key is rather perfunctory (though satisfactorily admitting a check to White); yet 1.♙d6! does seem to be the only key possible with this matrix! The Stocchi theme has also been exhibited with *changed mates* between try- and key-phases, as in **12A**:

12A. Horatio L. Musante: 3rd Prize *Chess Life*, 1958



≠2 [1 try]

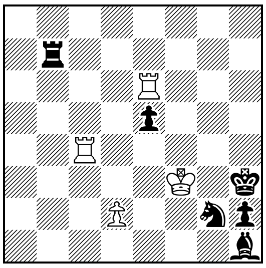
1.♕e2? (>2.♕e6)	**1.♕b3!** (>2.♕e6)
1...♟×f5 2.♕a6≠;	1...♟×f5 2.♖a6≠;
1...♛×f5 2.♕e7≠;	1...♛×f5 2.♗e7≠;
1...♞×f5 2.♘d5≠;	1...♞×f5 2.♘e4≠;
1...♚×f5 2.♗×g4≠;	1...♚×f5 2.♗e4≠.
1...♞e5 2.♕×e5≠;	
1...♞e3!	

(Pity about the unprovided flight in **12A**...) {ed.}. The key of **12** allows a check, and all five variations involve self-blocks {Andy Sag [S]}. One immediately looks at the a2–g8 diagonal and the first move tried was 1.♙d6. A weak key, but Ottavio Stocchi would have liked the White battery-play against the various thematic defences. Lovely stuff {Bob Meadley [M]}.

13. 'Hannah Nasai' (Japan): Original

{♔g1, ♖f3; ♚g4, ♞d2, ♟e2} Ser-H≠14. **Intention**: **1.♞f1 2.♟e1♜ 3.♜e4 4.♜f4 5.♚f5 6.♚e5 7.♜d4 8.♜d3 9.♚d4 10.♚c3 11.♚d2 12.♚e1 13.♜d1 14.♞d2,** ♖e3≠. Alas, there are **duals** – i.e. unwanted variations in the intended play and/or move-order – such as **6.♚e4 7.♞e3 10.♚e1 12.♜d1 13.♞c4**, and a **cook**: **4.♚h8 5.♞f1 6.♟e1♜ 8.♜h7 11.♞g7,** ♖f8≠; this cook is easily eradicated by shifting everything one square to the left, but intrinsic inaccuracies like the above dual are ruinous here. Anyway, the plan is that through line-closures, both ♔ and ♚ are *shielded* from check and the ♚ *encircles* the ♖, shepherded by the latter's opposite number – here, a promotee. Such thematic manoeuvres are very common in series-movers (as is underpromotion), and often serve to fix such a problem's move-order. In **13**, Black's sequence also finishes with a *switchback* by the ♞ to d2, followed by an *ideal mate* – whereby all squares from the mated ♚'s field are guarded or blocked uniquely, and *everything* on the board participates in the checkmate. The tactics of shielding and encirclement, ♜ and ♚ shifting in tandem, have been amplified to task proportions:

13A. Brian Tomson: *British Chess Magazine*, 1982

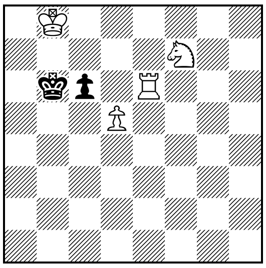


Ser-H≠28

1.♜g7 2.♜g4 ... 4.♚h5 5.♜g6 ... 8.♚f8 ... 10.♜e7 ... 12.♚d8 ... 14.♜c6 ... 17.♚a5 ... 19.♜b4 ... 21.♚a3 ... 23.♜c2 ... 26.♚×d2 ... 28.♜e1, ♖d6≠.

One also frequently encounters shielding by a ♞ or a ♝ in this sort of series-mover:

13B. Ian Shanahan: 6th/7th Comm. e.a. *The Problemist*, 1987

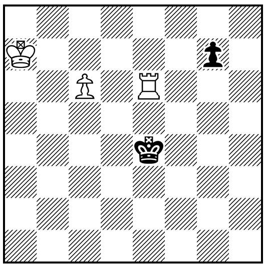


Ser-H=20

1.♚c5 2.♚d4 ... 7.♟c1♞! (♟c1♛?) ... 9.♞e5 ... 11.♚f5 ... 13.♞f6 ... 15.♚×f7! ... 17.♞e7 ... 19.♚d8 20.♞c6+, ♙×c6=.

(An *ideal stalemate* plus a capture-free *rundlauf* – 'round trip' – by the ♟→♞c6 to boot!);

13C. Ian Shanahan: Comm. *Ideal-Mate Review*, 1986 [version]

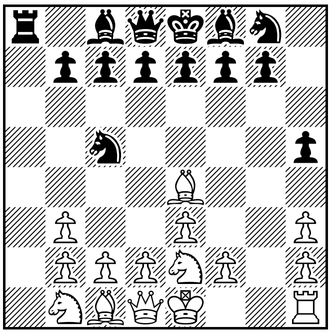


Ser-H=18

1.♚d4! (to shield the ♔a7) **... 6.♟g1♝! (♟g1♛?) ... 8.♝e5 ... 10.♚f5 11.♝f6 ... 13.♚f7 14.♝e7 (♛e7+??) ... 16.♚d8 ... 18.♝b8+, ♔×b8=.**

(Again, *ideal stalemate* in **13C**; but this time an *excelsior* march by the ♟g7 instead of a *rundlauf*.) {ed.}. The one mating square [in **13**] you have forgotten my dear is h8, hence there is a cook in 11. So Hannah, you get the spanner {M}. Incredible sequence with only five pieces. Congratulations {Markus Wettstein [W]}. Sorry to say, this one is cooked in 11 {S}.

14. Peter Wong (Australia): Original

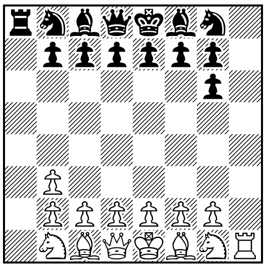


SPG 12½

1.♙e3 ♟a5 2.♗d3 ♜a6 3.♘e2 ♜h6 4.♖g1 ♜h3 5.♙×h3 ♟h5 6.♖g4 ♜h6 7.♖b4 ♟×b4 8.♗e4 ♟b3 9.♙a×b3 ♜a6 10.♖a5 ♜a8 11.♖g5 ♞a6 12.♖g1 ♞c5 13.♖h1.

I can do no better than to quote the composer himself: “I tried to make this problem as economical in length as possible for the theme. ... Both ♖ and ♜ on their home squares are substitute pieces [originating from the reflected file, on the other side of the board; this principle is known as the *Sibling theme*]. I found one precursor on the Internet problem database:

14A. Ulf Hammarström: *Die Schwalbe*, 1993

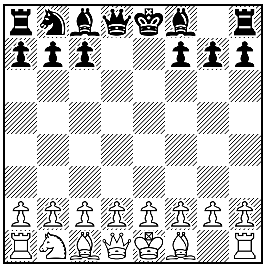


SPG 8

1.♙h4 ♟a5 2.♖h3 ♜a6 3.♖g3 ♜b6 4.♖g6 ♜b3 5.♙a×b3 ♟h×g6 6.♖×a5 ♜×h4 7.♖h5 ♜a4 8.♖h1 ♜a8.

This one [**14A**], though very short, is mechanical and symmetrical. The [Sibling] theme is well known when ♞s are used, viz. the classic **14B** by E. C. Mortimer (version by Andrey Frolkin):”

14B. E. C. Mortimer (version by Andrey Frolkin): [source? date?]



SPG 4

1.♘f3 ♟e5 2.♘×e5 ♞e7 3.♘×d7 ♞ec6 4.♘×b8 ♞×b8.

Although I’m no connoisseur of SPGs, Peter’s **14** certainly shines by comparison with the forerunners he cites above {ed.}.

[**14** is the] toughie as I expected from Machiavellian Pete {M}. 8.♗e4! – the hard one to find. This is a fantastic retro with all unique moves. It took me quite some time to solve it, but the effort was very worthwhile. I particularly enjoyed the mirror-like movements of the ♖♜s: the a♖/h♜ becomes the h♖/a♜. Again, congratulations to the composer {W}. Solved by a process of eliminating try-lines in decreasing order of obviousness including promotion. All tries fail due to impossible sequences or excessive number of moves. In the correct line, each player gets a ♖♜ captured and then moves the remaining ♖♜ to the original square of the captured one. Very devious! {S}.

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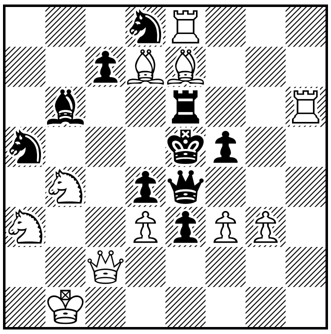
For this issue, I digress from the regular BILLABONG fare and instead feature two brief didactic articles by the co-winners of the inaugural Whyatt Medal for Chess Composition, Denis Saunders and Peter Wong. (It is a condition of this Medal's award that the two recipients write such articles, by way of introducing problems in general and their own work in particular to the chess-playing public.) But first, a few words to acquaint readers with the man after whom the award is named might not be inappropriate. A resident of Sydney, William A. ("Bill") Whyatt (1914–1976) was undoubtedly one of the greatest chess problemists Australia has ever produced: a supreme artist. Although he composed across a fairly broad gamut of genres, the 3er was his speciality – specifically, the *mutate* 3er (i.e. showing set-play for every Black move, with at least one line changed by a threatless key) which he dubbed "the poor relation" on account of its rarity – and at this he achieved spectacular success, winning the prestigious Brian Harley Award a record five times. Whyatt also occasionally collaborated with another Australian problem luminary, Alexander Goldstein of Melbourne, to produce several classics. We now begin with Denis Saunders expounding on the orthodox direct-mate:

DENIS SAUNDERS: *TRADITIONAL CHESS COMPOSITION*

Traditional chess problems can be categorized as **waiters** or **threat** types. In a waiter, after the key (usually, apparently innocuous) there are discrete mates for all responses no matter what move Black makes. With threat problems White's key is such that it sets up an active second move which will answer many of Black's responses. However, Black may make some unique replies, not covered by the threat, which give rise to **variations**. This is exemplified by my problems' solutions below. A good key move is one that is *generous*: it may be sacrificial, allow Black to check White, or give the ♚ a flight square (or squares). Preferably there is a combination of **gifts** in really good keys.

In **S1** the key, as well as being a quadruple sacrifice, allows Black to check White via 1...♛×d3. The **battery** referred to below by Barry Barnes is the ♖ + ♗ + ♜ configuration at e8, e7 and e6 respectively. A simple battery consists of just two White pieces, with that closest to the ♚ being the **firing piece**. In the above case the battery is termed **masked** because of the interposition of the ♜. However in this problem, by its nature, a battery mate (by the threat) can occur without the ♜ moving as it is **pinned** by the ♖ on e8.

S1. Denis Saunders: 1st Prize *Australian Chess Problem Magazine* Theme Tourney, 1995



≠2

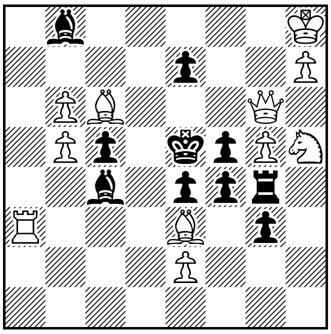
1.♕c6! (>2.♗f6)
1...♜×c6 2.♗d6≠;
1...♛×c6 2.♙f4≠;
1...♞d×c6 2.♖×e6≠;
1...♞a×c6 2.♘c4≠;
1...♜×e7 2.♕f6≠;
1...♛×d3+ 2.♘×d3≠;
1...♛h4 2.♕d5≠;
1...♟f4 2.♕×e4≠.

S1 won 1st Prize in a theme tourney for ♕-sacrifice 2ers. The judge, English IM Barry P. Barnes, wrote: "An undisputed active quadruple sacrifice of the ♕! A problem which may be remembered for its key move ... The 9 mates are interesting and good, especially the 3 mates by the ♕, and the second opening 2.♗d6 of the masked ♖/♗ battery".

In **S2**, the ♕ gives a flight and is sacrificial but there are White moves to **grab** the ♝ wherever it moves on its diagonal. If captured *in situ* the ♟e7 moves to e6 so that the ♕ cannot mate on d5. But this creates a **self-block** aborting Black's flight square and allowing White to mate by capturing c5. If the ♕ is captured by

the ♝ it, in turn, is taken by the ♙h7 which promotes to become a replacement ♕. If Black now **interferes** (and self-blocks at e6) this promoted ♕ can optimize its unique geometry by capturing the ♝b8. Another attractive Black variation, threatening to check the ♔, is 1...♜×g5!

S2. **Denis Saunders**: 1st Prize *The Problemist*, 1995
~ Dedicated to Arthur Willmott ~



≠3

1.♕g8! (>2.♕×c4 ♟e6 3.♕×c5)
1...♝d6 2.♕×c4 ♟e6 3.♕c3≠;
1...♚d6 2.♕×c4 ♟e6 3.♕×c5≠;
2...♟e5 3.♗×c5≠;
2...♚e5 3.♕d5≠;
1...♝×g8 2.♙×g8♕ ♟e6 3.♕×b8≠;
1...♝b3 2.♖×b3 ♟e6 3.♕×b8≠;
1...♝a2 2.♖×a2 ♟e6 3.♕×b8≠;
1...♝f7 2.♕×b8+ ♚e6 3.♘g7≠;
1...♜×g5 2.♗×f4+ ♚d4 3.♙e3≠.

S2 was inspired by the theme tourney won by **S1**, hence the dedication to Arthur Willmott, *Australian Chess Problem Magazine* editor. There are five different mates following Black self-blocks, including three by the ♕ after 2...♟e6. Indeed, the variation after 1...♝d6 has self-blocks by both Black moves. **S2** won the British Chess Problem Society's Godfrey Heathcote Cup for the best 3er of 1995; The judge J. G. Gill opined that this problem "exposes all the secrets of spectacular chess, including surprise".

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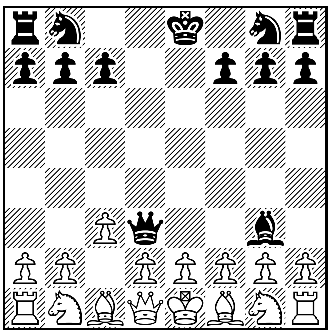
PETER WONG: *A NOTE ON SHORTEST PROOF GAMES*

Chess compositions encompass many different genres; one of my favourites is **shortest proof games** (SPGs). In this type of problem, one is asked to reconstruct the game that leads to the diagram position (from the opening array), using the fewest number of moves. Effectively one controls both White and Black, and that the moves would not be sensible during an actual game is considered irrelevant. SPGs are also characterized by their precise play – the move-order in a solution is unique. This requirement contributes to the problem's artistic quality. Some SPGs incorporate two precise solutions that arrive at the same position, which is fairly difficult to arrange. **W1** is the only SPG thus far known to involve *three* distinct solutions, each starting with a different move:

W1. **Peter Wong**: 1st Prize *Problem Observer*, 1995



SPG 6½, 3 solutions

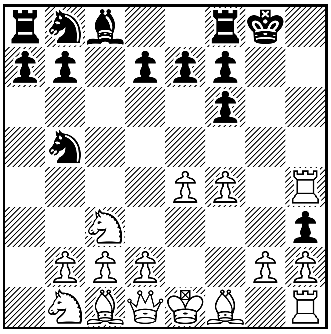
(a) **1.♘f3 ♟e5 2.♘×e5 ♝d6 3.♘×d7 ♝g3 4.♘e5 ♝g4 5.♙c3 ♝f3 6.♘×f3 ♛d3 7.♘g1**;

(b) **1.♘c3 ♟d5 2.♘×d5 ♝e6 3.♘×e7 ♝d5 4.♘×d5 ♝d6 5.♘c3 ♝g3 6.♘b1 ♛d3 7.♙c3**;

(c) **1.♙c3 ♟e6 2.♕a4 ♝d6 3.♕×d7+ ♚f8 4.♕×c8 ♝g3 5.♕×e6 ♛d3 6.♕b3 ♚e8 7.♕d1**.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The most important feature of a chess problem is its **theme** – the principal idea or effect shown by the play. **W2** combines two paradoxical themes. The first may be called **pseudo-castling**: despite Black's castled position, the quickest way to reach the diagram does *not* involve castling. For if we try 11...0-0?, Black is unable to lose a tempo and the game takes an extra move. The second is known as the **Phoenix theme**, in which a piece gets captured but is replaced on its original square by a promoted piece.

W2. Peter Wong: 2nd-6th Place e.a. *British Chess Magazine*, 1996

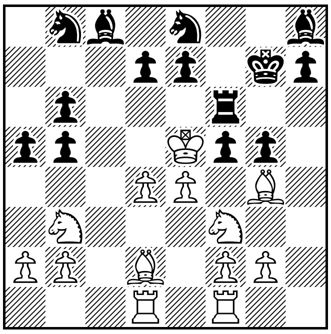


SPG 15½

1.♙a4 ♟h5 2.♙a5 ♟h4 3.♖a4 ♟h3 4.♖h4 ♞h6 5.♙e4 ♞f5 6.♕f3 ♞d6 7.♕f6 ♟g×f6 8.♘e2 ♝h6 9.♘ec3 ♝e3 10.♙f4 ♝b6 11.♙×b6 ♚f8 12.♙×c7 ♚g7 13.♙×d8♕ ♜f8 14.♕a5 ♚g8 15.♕h5 ♞b5 16.♕d1.

W3 is a unique work in demonstrating double White castling in the two parts. Additionally, the two solutions see changes in the order by which White and Black develop their pieces, and also notable are the different sweeping moves of the ♛.

W3. Peter Wong: 1st Prize *The Problemist*, 1990



SPG 17, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♙e4 ♟a5 2.♕e2 ♜a6 3.♕×a6 ♟b5 4.♕b6 ♟c×b6 5.♗e2 ♛c7 6.♗g4 ♛×c2 7.♘f3 ♛c7 8.0-0 ♛×h2+ 9.♔×h2 ♟f5 10.♔g3 ♞f6 11.♔f4 ♟g5+ 12.♔e5 ♝g7 13.♙d4 0-0 14.♘bd2 ♝h8 15.♘b3 ♚g7 16.♗d2 ♞e8 17.♖ad1 ♜f6**;

(b) **1.♙d4 ♟a5 2.♕d3 ♜a6 3.♕×a6 ♟b5 4.♕b6 ♟c×b6 5.♘d2 ♛c7 6.♘b3 ♛×h2 7.♗d2 ♛c7 8.0-0-0 ♛×c2+ 9.♔×c2 ♟g5 10.♔d3 ♝g7 11.♔e4 ♞f6+ 12.♔e5 0-0 13.♙e4 ♝h8 14.♗e2 ♚g7 15.♗g4 ♞e8 16.♘f3 ♟f5 17.♖hf1 ♜f6**.

CHESS PROBLEM SOURCES

If you're interested in SPGs and have access to the Internet, a good place to look for more examples is the Retrograde Analysis Corner at < http://www.janko.at/Retros/ >. There you will find, for example, Mark Kirtley's *Proof game shorties*, a series of articles examining SPGs that solve in seven moves or less. For chess problems in general, we highly recommend *The Problemist*, a bi-monthly magazine that covers all aspects of chess composition. It includes *The Problemist Supplement*, which caters for newcomers, and is available from: The British Chess Problem Society, c/o Tony Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 9QA, UNITED KINGDOM. The subscription for new members is £15 (add £3.50 for airmail) [currently (2008) flat rate £20, (under 21s £10)], payable to the Society. The BCPS also has its own excellent and informative website: < http://www.bcps.ukf.net > [now (2008) < www.theproblemist.org >].

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PROBLEM BILLABONG, September/October 2003

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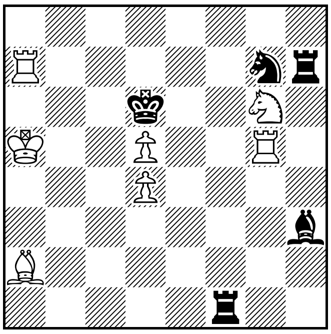
A full complement of original compositions surface in the BILLABONG this time, all of them evoking bygone eras. Our regular English contributor – the prolific master-problemist David Shire – proffers **15**, an attractive blend of line-themes popular during the 1930s (and earlier): can you name them? The style of Denis's **16** is perhaps even more retrospective; although not as thematically sophisticated as **15**, it nonetheless guarantees solving pleasure. **17** and **18** could well hail from the 19th century! The name over **17** is surely hint enough for *cognoscenti* ... or is it? – welcome Tony! And greetings also to Juan Kloostra, Fiji's leading problemist and (former?) chess champion. Juan's 5er, **18**, is not as hard to solve as one might think ... once you have discerned its piquant geometric idea. Do, please, have a crack at it!

15. David Shire (England): Original



≠2

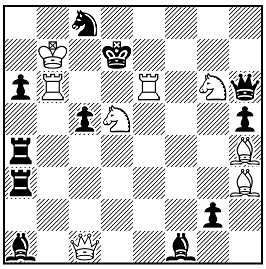
1.♘e5! (>2.♘c4)
1…♜f5 2.♖d7≠;
1…♝f5 2.♘f7≠;
1…♞f5 2.♖g6≠;
1…♝d7 2.♖×d7≠;
1…♜c1 2.♘f7≠.

An affably thematic key severs the guard-line g5–d5, only to open it again while simultaneously closing the diagonal guard a2–d5 in the threat. So Black defends by prospectively shutting the first guard-line at f5 in three variations: these are known as *Levman defences*. But alas! Black also cuts off his own lines of guard – the mutual interference of ♜ and ♝ at f5 constitutes a *Grimshaw* – which of course White exploits in each mate. Savour that the *double* interference 1…♞f5 (fully taken-advantage-of by White) is also a line-opening for the ♜h7, which thereby obviates the first two mates.

The composer wrote to me that he was annoyed at the lack of an active rôle for the ♔ in **15** (this *can* be avoided, yet causes greater difficulties), but to my mind, a much worse flaw is the repetition of thematic mates in the last two variations: *clarity* is compromised.

A more intensive rendering of Levman defences plus Grimshaws is **15A**:

15A. Marcel Segers: *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 1933



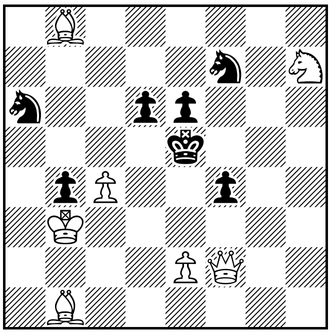
≠2

1.♕d1! (>2.♘f6)
1...♜d4 2.♘e5≠;
1...♝d4 2.♖e3≠;
1...♜d3 2.♕×a4≠;
1...♝d3 2.♖e4≠;
1...♛d2 2.♘f8≠;
1...♞d6+ 2.♖×d6≠.

Five Levman defences (to eliminate the guard of d8 in the threat), including *two* Grimshaws on the d-file! {ed.}.

15 has nice play using the f5 square for line blocks etc. {Andy Sag [S]}. A Grimshaw on f5, but, with respect, the ♘ is the first piece tried {Bob Meadley [M]}.

16. **Denis Saunders** (Australia): Original

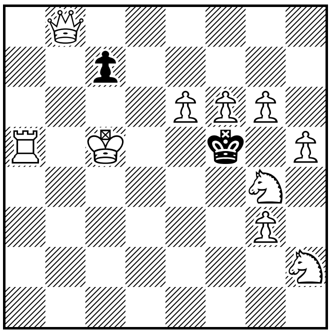


≠2

1.♕g1? (>2.♕g7) 1...♞g5!
1.♕a7! (zz)
1...♞c5+ 2.♕×c5≠;
1...♞c7,♞×b8 2.♕a1≠;
1...♞f~ 2.♕g7≠;
1...♟f3 2.♕e3≠.

The try – not stipulated with **16**'s diagram – is a bit fatuous, since its refutation is initially unprovided-for. However, Denis's quiet *ambush* key is truly excellent, leading to line-openings by both ♞s {ed.}. Bearing in mind DS's predilection for ♕ and ♘ keys, this has some satisfying play to a1 and g7 {M}. Lots of ♕-hikes, with a good pin-mate after the check {S}. [This pin-line is, however, already set (or 'static') {ed.}.]

17. **Tony Lewis** (England): Original

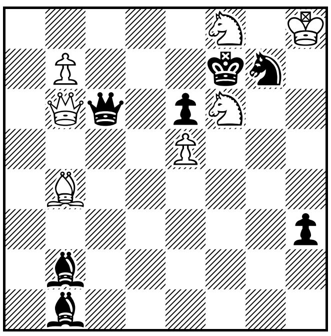


≠2

1.♙e7! (zz)
1...♚g5 2.♔c6≠;
1...♚e6 2.♕c8≠;
1...♚e4 2.♕b1≠;
1...♟c6 2.♕e5≠.

Cognoscenti would be expecting a mutate from this problemist, who is arguably that genre's greatest living exponent. Indeed **17** *is* a *complete block* (or 'White to Play') – though no mates are changed by the neutral waiting key. Thematically, the ♚'s three moves generate *Y-flights*, and lead to *pure mates* (i.e. mates with singular guards or blocks of the mated ♚'s field). Tony himself writes that **17** "illustrates that the ♔ can be necessary, or economical, in the final position other than by guarding squares in the ♚'s field. After 1...♚g5 2.♔c6≠, the ♔ is preventing the attack on the ♚ (by the ♖a5) from being remedied by 2...♟c5." {ed.}. White has his mates ready and must find a move that does not destroy these mates {M}. Three non-return flight traps make a nice theme {S}.

18. **Juan Kloostra** (Fiji): Original, "The Chasing Queens"



≠5

1.♕g1! (>2.♕g6≠), the main line being:
1...♛g2 2.♕c5 (>3.♕c7, ♕e7≠) 2...♛×b7
3.♕g1 ♛g2 4.♕a7+ ♛b7 5.♕×b7≠.

The composer himself labelled **18** with the motto "The Chasing Queens" – say no more! (Actually, despite being no expert on longer direct-mates, I do have a feeling that such manoeuvres are called *Loshinsky magnets* [particularly when the ♛ lobs herself right next to the ♕], but I haven't as yet been able to verify this.) {ed.}. White's threats force Black to follow on and play ♕♛-tag. Thanks for the 'geometric' tip as I was struggling with this one {M}. Interesting how Black is forced to remove the interfering ♙! {S}.

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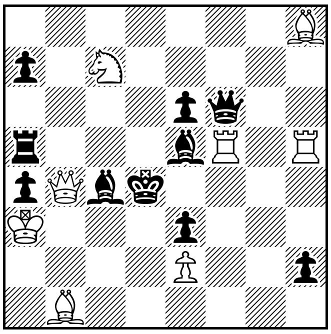
For the only remaining PROBLEM BILLABONG of 2003, it's back to the usual menu! So we begin by quoting a traditional 2er by Bill Whyatt's eminent Polish-Australian collaborator, the late Alex Goldstein: I do hope Alex's 'golden oldie' **19** is unfamiliar even to the most erudite readers; its solution – with my commentary – is given [below]. Then let's have something of a Shire-feast (minus the hobbits!), with *two* originals by the English whiz! David's **20** contains a thematic combination – 'old plus new' – which he has displayed before in the BILLABONG; do you recollect what that might be? Next, change gear for his **22**, a harmonious helpmate *twin* featuring what kind of *echo* effect? Remember that here *Black begins* – and that once you've solved the diagram, you're only halfway there, because you must put a ♖ on c8 to solve again! Finally, welcome back to Dr Molham Hassan who charms us with a neat antique-style 3er, **21**, composed during the 1990s. **A PLEA TO COMPOSERS**: I am fast running out of original problems, so please come to the BILLABONG's rescue *soon*...

19. Alexander Goldstein: 2nd Comm. *The Problemist*, 1978-II

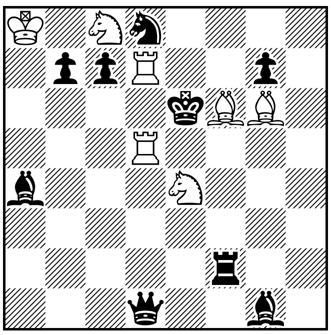


≠2

1.♗d3! (>2.♕×c4)
1...♝d6 2.♘×e6≠;
1...♛f8 2.♖h4≠;
1...♛e7 2.♖f4≠;
1...♜c5 2.♕b2≠.

The ♝e5 and ♛f6 are *half-pinned*, in a rare diagonal aspect; their three thematic defences leave their stationary companion pinned while the moving Black piece defeats the threat by pinning the ♕. Naturally, White's mate in each case exploits Black's self-pinning error! *Byplay* (i.e. non-thematic but constructionally essential variations) 1...♜c5 2.♕b2≠ rounds off Goldstein's strategically intensive problem nicely with a *self-block*. Forgive my reminiscing, but I fondly remember solving this masterful composition in my youth, when it was first published in September 1978. Only much later did I discover that Alex had already shown this same appealing thematic blend a year or so earlier in *The Problemist* – but in a lateral setting with half-pinned ♜ and ♛ {ed.}.

20. David Shire (England): Original



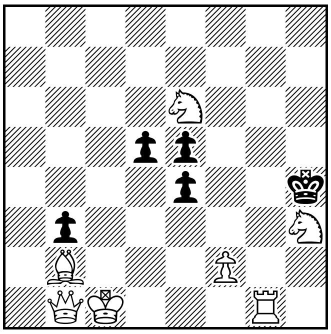
≠2 [2 tries]

1.♗×g7?/♗c3? (>2.♘c5, ♘g5)
1...♛×d5 2.♖e7≠;
1...♝×d7 2.♖e5≠;
1...♜g2,♜f5 2.♗(×)f5≠;
1...♛c1!/♛d4!

1.♘b6! (>2.♖e7, ♖e5)
1...♟g×f6 2.♘c5≠;
1...♜×f6 2.♘g5≠;
1...♟c×b6 2.♖d6≠;
1...♞c6 2.♗f7≠.

"I'm still fiddling around with that Odessa theme!" writes the composer, who continues: "No Novotny or Grimshaw [themes] here – all very gentle strategy-wise, but constructionally OK I think". Yes indeed! And sure enough, the Odessa theme *does* resurface – it was last seen in David Shire's **9** from the March 2003 BILLABONG – but without the aforenamed interference themes. To remind readers: with the *Odessa theme*, post-try threats recur as post-key mates whereas 'reciprocally', post-try mates reappear as the threats made by the key {ed.}. Symmetrical double threats in both true and try play, the latter (2.♘c5, ♘g5) neatly separated as variations after the key {Andy Sag [S]}. This is the Odessa theme as in David's **9**. A very, very good solvers' problem, and if one starts with the ♗f6 it is even more tricky {Bob Meadley [M]}.

21. Molham Hassan (Australia): Original

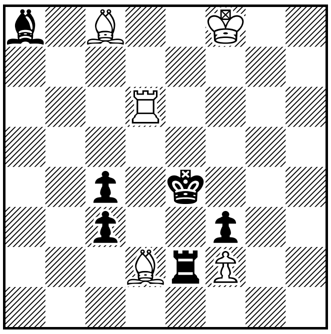


≠3

1.♘d4! (zz)
1...♟e3 2.♕h7≠;
1...♟×d4 2.♘f4! (zz) 2...♟e3 3.♕h7≠;
2...♟d3 3.♗f6≠;
1...♚×h3 2.♘f3 (>3.♖g3) 2...♟×f3 3.♕h7≠;
1...♚h5 2.♘f5 ~ 3.♖g5≠.

Prettily sacrificial – but the unprovided flights are something of a blemish, alas {ed.}. Very tough for me and took hours to solve. A beauty Molham! {M}. The thematic variations use a ♘ as a spider to paralyse the ♚ on three different ranks before the kill. The sacrifice of both ♘s in sequence is a clever touch. The short mate 1...♟e3 2.♕h7≠ is a pity, but I don't see how it can be avoided in this case {S}.

22. David Shire (England): Original



H≠2; (b) ♖c8

(a) **1.♝d5 ♗e3 2.♚d3 ♗f5**≠;
(b) **1.♜e3 ♖d5 2.♚f4 ♖×c4**≠.

There is absolutely perfect analogy – a pristine *echo* – between the two phases of **22**: Black shuts a White line, then vice versa; the ♚ now takes his newly-accessible flight – crucially pinning his subject which moved last – and White pounces (with *pin-model mates* no less). All line-closures are fully exploited by the other side. But from part (a) to (b) in **22**, witness that the angle of all affected lines switches between 'orthogonals' and 'diagonals'; such geometric rotation has recently come to be labelled *orthogonal-diagonal transformation* (or *ODT* for short) {ed.}. A super chameleon-echo model with the ♝ and ♜ respectively pinned and shut off in (a) but the other way round in (b) {M}. Chameleon twin with ♖♜s and ♗♝s exchanging mating, pinning and interference tasks {S}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, January/February 2004

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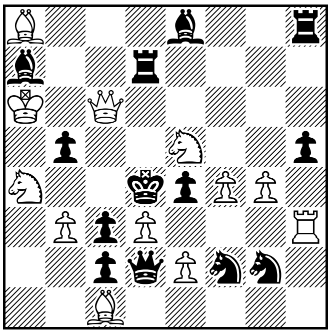
Usher in 2004 at the BILLABONG with a couple of Foster's! No, not that poxy beer, but **23** and **26** below, both composed by Canberra's quiet achiever, Geoff Foster. Our warmest greetings to Geoff, an ace problemist who is in red-hot creative form at present: Geoff's **26** – in which Black plays 16 *consecutive* legal moves (White not moving at all) to reach a position where White can *stalemate* Black in 1 – will, I predict, give solvers a real headache, with much wailing and gnashing of teeth! (Note that **26** has *two* solutions.) Geoff's 2er, **23**, is 'simply' *colossal*; I give a full account of it [below]. To round off this New-Year BILLABONG's all-Australian content, Denis Saunders and Molham Hassan proffer their customary traditional fare.

COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENT: A munificent benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous) has donated a sum of money to encourage more solvers and Australian problemists. PROBLEM BILLABONG therefore offers $100 to its *top solver of 2004* – ties, if any, shall be split according to the quality of solvers' comments – as well as $20 for the BILLABONG's *best original position to appear during 2004 by a novice Australian composer*. Hopefully, this act of pecuniary generosity might draw some of you budding problem-enthusiasts out of the woodwork!

23. Geoff Foster: 4th Prize *The Problemist*, 2001



≠2 [set play, 2 tries]

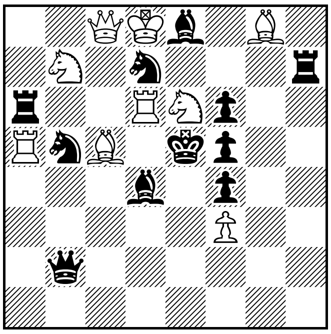
1...♟e3 2.♘f3≠;
1...♝g6 2.♕×d7≠;
1...♝c5 2.♕×c5≠;
1...♝c5 2.♕×c5≠;
1.♘f7?[A]/**♘g6?**[B] (>2.♕f6[C])
1...♟×a4 2.♕c4≠;
1...♞×h3,♞×d3,♞×g4 2.♕×e4≠;
1...♛×f4 2.♕×c3≠;
1...♜d5 2.♕×d5≠;
1...♜d6,♜b7 2.♕(×)d6≠;
1...♜h6![a]/♜f8![b]

1.♕f6![C] (>2.♘g6, ♘f7, ♘×d7, ♘c4)
1...♜h6[a] 2.♘g6[B]≠;
1...♜f8[b] 2.♘f7[A]≠;
1...♟×a4 2.♘×d7≠;
1...♞×h3 2.♘c4≠;
1...♞×d3 2.♘×d3≠;
1...♞×g4 2.♘×g4≠;
1...♛×f4 2.♘f3≠;
1...♜d5 2.♘c6≠;
1...♜d6+,♜b7,♜e7 2.♕(×)d6≠;
1...♝b8 2.♕b6≠.

This massive prize-winning work parades several thematic ideas. Firstly, savour all of the mate *changes* between post-key- and try-play (count them!), and notice that every one of Black's defences materializes throughout each of these phases. After the key, we also observe *Fleck-Karlström threat-separation* – i.e. the four threats by the ♘e5 are each forced to appear *singly* as mates – and on top of that, the next four variations consummate a *tour* by the ♘e5: this ♘, in firing the *battery* set up by the key, visits each of the eight squares to which it has potential access in response to eight Black defences. Embedded within all of this abovementioned activity across the three phases is further unific *pattern play*: the algebraic try/refutation-mate/defence relationship {Tries: 1.A?/B? 1...a!/b! 1.Key! 1...a/b 2.B/A≠} constitutes the *Banny theme* (named after a Russian problemist who popularized it from the late 1960s onwards); this formal pattern is most often found in conjunction with *battery formation*, where it has almost become a cliché – an accusation from which **23**'s original and fresh thematic brew undeniably escapes! And intertwined with **23**'s Banny pattern one can also discern *try/key* + *threat sequence-reversal*: {Tries: 1.A?/B? (>2.C) Key: 1.C! (>2.A, B, ...)}. (Incidentally, Geoff Foster also won 3rd Prize in the same tourney with another beautiful 2er which displays similar thematic ideas; alas! – there's just not enough space to show it...)

Anyway, on a personal note, **23** is the fruit of mutual encouragement between two Australian problemists – the sort of thing that makes composing such a joy! During late 2000, I composed a couple of 2ers myself showing the Banny theme *doubled* within a schema of threat-separation; one of these 2ers also exhibited changed mates, and collectively they helped inspire GF to compose his own two Banny masterpieces {ed.}.

24. Denis Saunders (Australia): Original

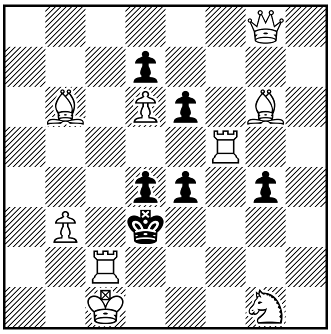


≠2

1.♘f8! (>2.♖d5)
1...♛a2,♛b3,♞c3,♞c7 2.♗×d4≠;
1...♞×d6,♜×d6 2.♗×d6≠;
1...♜f7 2.♘g6≠;
1...♝f7 2.♘×d7≠;
1...♞b6 2.♕e6≠.

The customary traditional confection of (Grimshaw) interferences and battery mates from Denis. Often, when one sees a ♘ laterally adjacent to the ♚ in a 2er, it is probably the key-piece {ed.}. *Pot-pourri* of pins, interferences, clearances and necessary double checks {Andy Sag [S]}. A nicely balanced position material-wise, and good square defensive masking and pinning {Bob Meadley [M]}.

25. Molham Hassan (Australia): Original

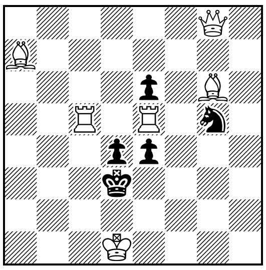


≠2

1.♙b4! (zz)
1...♟g3 2.♖f3≠;
1...♚e3 2.♖c3≠;
1...♟e3 2.♖f~≠;
1...♟6~ 2.♕b3≠.

Lovely *chameleon-echo pin-mates* in the first two variations, although the ♕ is very under-employed; also, see below {ed.}. Looks like a ♕ key as it is so out-of-play, but the penny soon drops since Black has few moves. A nice waiter {M}. The need to provide for 1...♟6~ makes the key fairly obvious {S}. However, the marvellous news is that Andy has managed to compose a splendid version of **25** which saves 4 units (thereby making the problem a *Meredith*), improves the key (to render it sacrificial and unpinning), adds a plausible try (thereby giving rise to a *changed mate* after 1...♞~ between the two phases), and removes those horrible *duals* after 1...♟e3, all the while preserving Molham's variation play and perfecting his echo effect! There is, nonetheless, a price to pay: 1...♚e3 is now initially unprovided-for –

25v. Molham Hassan & Andy Sag: Original

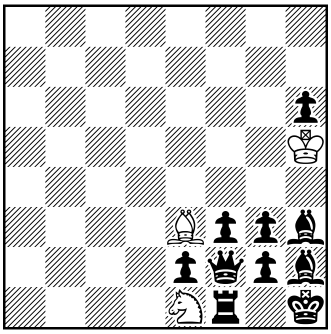


≠2 [1 try]

1.♕f8? (zz)
1...♞~ 2.♕f3≠; 1...♞f7!
1.♖f5! (zz)
1...♞~ 2.♖f3≠;
1...♚e3 2.♖c3≠;
1...♟e3 2.♖×g5≠;
1...♟6~ 2.♕b3≠.

I exhort readers – particularly Molham! – to examine **25v** closely, as an example of substantial problem-improvement and overall constructional excellence {ed.}.

26. Geoff Foster (Australia): Original



Ser-H=16, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♟g1♞ 2.♝g2 3.♞h3 4.♛g1 5.♜f2 6.♝f1 7.♛g2 8.♝g1 9.♚h2 10.♛h1 11.♜g2 12.♝f2 13.♞g1 14.♚h3 15.♜h2 16.♟g2, ♗×f2**=;

(b) **1.♟g1♜ 2.♛g2 3.♜f2 4.♜gf1 5.♝g1 6.♚h2 7.♛h1 8.♝g2 9.♚h3 10.♝h2 11.♜g1 12.♝f1 13.♜gg2 14.♝g1 15.♜h2 16.♟g2, ♗f4**=.

As I predicted, this ‘coal-box’ did not prove so simple to solve: a fantastic *follow-my-leader* (abbreviation: *FML*) problem, like one of those old sliding-block puzzles pioneered by Sam Loyd. To the best of my knowledge, every one of Geoff’s series-movers to date exhibits this theme; he has even written his own dedicated computer program, WOMBAT, to aid his composition of them! {ed.}. I have continued ploughing my way through the Fosters nightmare. I spent most of last night drinking it in and have quite a chess headache this morning after too much Fosters! Not the “poxy beer” (as you put it) but the masterly **26**. When one prefigures a stalemate one can get stuck ... (b) is lovely. Many hours later ... having toyed with a ♞-promotion, I cracked the (a) solution. Superb! Heartiest congratulations to Geoff for a real beauty, worthy of a prize in *The Problemist* {M}. Bob even composed a limerick in homage to **26**, but I will spare you all... {ed.}. A third finale as per the end of (a) but with a ♜ on g1 instead of a ♞ is possible, but can only be reached legally in a minimum of 19 moves – too long in terms of the problem’s stipulation. Not difficult once the finales are identified {S}. Tell that to Bob!

A BRIEF NOTE CONCERNING (ENGLISH) GRANDMASTERS. Most readers of *Australian Chess* are probably unaware that FIDE confers the Grandmaster [GM] title not just for over-the-board play, but also for *chess composition* – and even for *solving* chess problems within a live competitive environment! These latter GM titles have been awarded officially by FIDE since the 1970s. Anyhow, in the previous issue of *Australian Chess* (p.40), Joe Petrolito reviewed a book about the late English GM Tony Miles, and in so doing made the oft-repeated assertion that Miles was “England’s first grandmaster”. Such a claim is technically incorrect: Comins Mansfield was made a GM for chess composition in 1972, some years before Tony Miles gained his player’s title. By the way, English GM John Nunn is in fact a *double* GM: Nunn also holds the GM title for competitive solving at chess-problem congresses, and has written a truly excellent textbook on the subject, *Solving in Style*. Indeed, more generally, there has been a lengthy history of GM players joyfully and respectfully engaging with chess compositions: Paul Keres in his youth was a very fine problemist; GM Pal Benkö (of Benkö Gambit fame) has received numerous accolades for his original chess problems since the 1960s; and former world champion José Capablanca was one of the greatest problem-solvers of all time! Closer to home, our own GM Ian Rogers used to be a regular problem-solver in the now-defunct *Chess in Australia*; he even composed a few problems, as I recall. (Is there any chance of a comeback, Ian?) All of which goes to show ... the best players take chess problems very seriously, endorse them to others, and *never* dismiss them as ‘totally irrelevant’ to the game. Why? Because chess problems exercise the imagination and improve one’s mental agility at the chessboard; they help players to internally visualize deep ramifications during a game. So as Ali G would say – “Respect!”.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, March/April 2004

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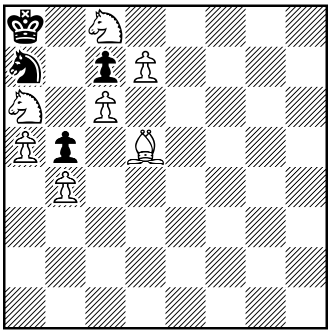
No quoted problem for analysis in the BILLABONG this time ... or is there? Solve the mysterious **27** – i.e. locate the one and only square upon which to deposit the ♔, *then* find the key for mate in 2 – and wait for my commentary [here given below]! A clue has been provided for astute readers to deduce the *true* identity of **27**'s composer. (You can thank Geoff Foster for passing on **27**.) Molham's **28** reminds me of certain classic masked half-pinners by Giorgio Guidelli (whence recently Michael Lipton) and Herbert Ahues; but here the Black half-pin is *doubly* masked. So what is **28**'s key? Heartiest greetings to Christopher Jones, helpmate editor of *The Problemist*, whose **29** is typical of his compositional mastery. (Remember that Black moves first in **29**'s two solutions, while White *cooperates* throughout to ensure the ♚'s demise.) Finally, I'm delighted to present David's very first series-mover, **30** – a brilliant debut, typical of him! (I do pray that it escapes anticipation.) In **30**, Black plays 5 *consecutive* legal moves, White not moving at all, to reach a position where White can mate Black in 1; then from the diagrammed position, move the ♜h8 to c2 and unravel it all again. Enjoy your solving!

27. 'Eric J. Möhn' (Luxembourg): 'Original'



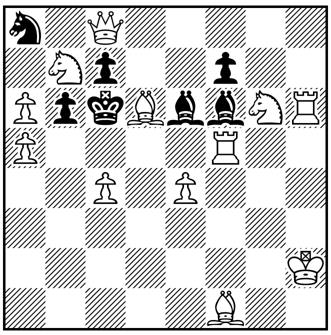
Add the ♔ for ≠2

Firstly, the true identity of **27**'s composer is **JOHN M. RICE** of England (his name being an anagram of 'Eric J. Möhn'); with the ♔ *already in place*, **27** was originally published as No.93 in Rice's book *Chess Problems for Solving* (1995). So where exactly *does* the ♔ reside in **27**? **Add the ♔ on c5!** This is the *sole* possibility for achieving mate in 2, in which case Black's previous move – the only one legally viable – *must* have been ♟b7-b5; hence we can proceed with:

1.♙×b5 *e.p.*! (>2.♙b7)
1...♟c×b6+ 2.♘×b6≠;
1...♞×c6 2.♗×c6≠;
1...♞×c8 2.♙×c8♕≠.

The study of play occurring prior to the diagrammed position is known as *retrograde analysis* {ed.}. A retro Meredith? {Andy Sag [S]}. **27** was one of four nice problems which took me most of the afternoon to get my head around {Bob Meadley [M]}.

28. Molham Hassan (Australia): Original

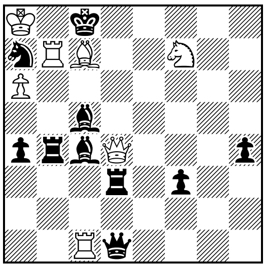


≠2 [1 try]

1.♗d~? (zz) 1...♟×a5!
1.♗c5! (zz)
1...♝e5+,♝g5,♝h4 2.♘(×)e5≠;
1...♝×c4 2.♕e8≠;
1...♝×c8 2.♘e5≠;
1...♟×a5 2.♘×a5≠;
1...♟×c5 2.♖×c5≠;
1...♟b5 2.♙×b5≠;
1...♟×g6 2.♕×e6≠.

All of **28**’s remaining variations are *dualized*, seriously compromising this problem’s worth; and the half-pin is *incomplete*. Compare it with two of those masked half-pin ‘classics’ cited in [this BILLABONG’s preamble]:

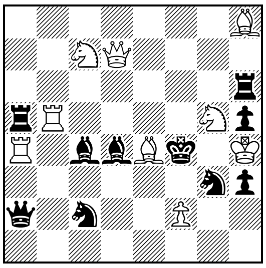
28A. Giorgio Guidelli: 5th Prize *Good Companions*, 1917



≠2

1.♗h2! (>2.♖c7)
1...♝d5 2.♕h8≠;
1...♝d6 2.♕g4≠;
1...♝b6,♞b5 2.♖b8≠;
1...♜×b7 2.♙×b7≠.

28B. Herbert Ahues: 1st Prize *Die Schwalbe* Ring Tourney, 1948

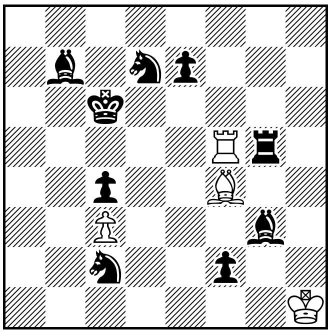


≠2

1.♗h1! (>2.♘×h3)
1...♝f6 2.♘e6(♘d5?)≠;
1...♝e6 2.♕d6(♗e5?)≠;
1...♝f1 2.♗e5(♘d5?)≠;
1...♝×f2 2.♘d5(♗e5?)≠;
1...♞f5+ 2.♕×f5≠;
1...♞×h1 2.♕f5≠.

28B’s ♝-variations show *dual-avoidance*, including the *Java theme* by the first pair {ed.}. The real danger in **28** is 1...♟×a5 and the ensuing ♚-flight. This must be stopped and the masked battery can only operate if the ♗d6 moves ... Also, it is the penultimate variation which gives relevance to the ♗f1; why not a ♙a4 instead? {M}. [More duals... {ed.}.] A good range of variations including pin-mates, but **28** needs work to get rid of the enormous number of duals in the post-key play, which makes it untidy – especially in a waiter {S}.

29v. Christopher J. A. Jones & Ian Shanahan (England / Australia): Original



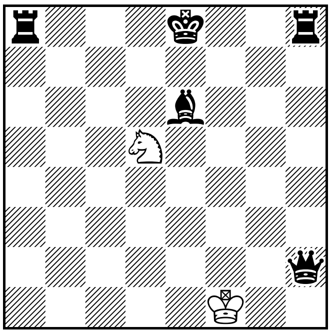
H≠3, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♞d4 ♖a5 2.♜b5 ♙×d4 3.♜b6 ♙d5≠**;
(b) **1.♞b4 ♗b8 2.♝c7 ♙×b4 3.♝b6 ♙b5≠**.

[Comments regarding **29**: **Christopher J. A. Jones**: {♔a7, ♖b4, ♗b3, ♙e2; ♚e5, ♜a4, ♝a2,f6, ♞d6,e1, ♟a6,c2,e3,f7,g4} H≠3, 2 solutions. (a) **1.♞d3 ♖×g4 2.♜f4 ♙×d3 3.♜f5 ♙d4≠**; (b) **1.♞f3 ♗×f7 2.♝e6 ♙×f3 3.♝f5 ♙f4≠**.]:

An *almost*-perfect *orthogonal-diagonal transformation* (abbreviation: *ODT*) between the two solutions: only the *critical move* 1...♖×g4 across d4 in (a) is not matched by a critical motive in (b); but this is the *discriminant* which forces accuracy thereafter. We also observe *Bristol clearances* in the corresponding ♖♜ and ♗♝ manoeuvres – rather appropriate, since the composer hails from Bristol! – as well as *model mates*. I find all of this quite splendid. However ... **A RECONSTRUCTION CHALLENGE**! The capture of the ♟s as part of both Bristol clearances is thematically somewhat objectionable in **29**. It *is* possible to polish this composition even more, fully preserving its strategic content, while eliminating such captures. Are *you* up to this constructional test? (Hint: make use of the board-edge to delimit the ♖’s and ♗’s moves; the ♔’s specific placement also proves vital.) Elucidation [in the preamble to the July 2004 PROBLEM BILLABONG]! {ed.}. Copycat: you move your ♖, I move my ♜; you move your ♗,... {M}. Very hard to solve; it took me several days. There are other lines of play that nearly succeed. ♟c2 prevents the ♝ reaching f5 via b1 {S}.

30. David Shire (England): Original

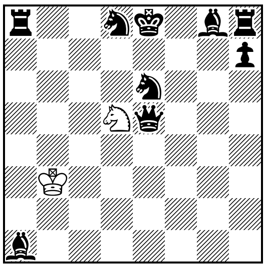


Ser-H≠5; (b) ♜h8→c2

(a) **1.♜a7 2.♜g7 3.♝f7 4.0-0 5.♛h8, ♘f6≠**;
(b) **1.♝c8 2.♝b7 3.0-0-0 4.♛b8 5.♜c7, ♘b6≠**.

To quote the composer himself: "My idea was 0-0 and 0-0-0 in the two solutions with orthogonal/diagonal echoes. So in (a), ♛ moves orthogonally to put a diagonal guard on the mating square which requires an anticipatory interference by a 2-move ♜ manoeuvre. In (b), ♛ moves diagonally to put an orthogonal guard on the mating square which requires an anticipatory interference by a 2-move ♝-manoeuvre. Well – that's what *I'm* saying! ... I just thought I would let you know roughly how my mind worked ... I can see this is flawed. [The first two moves] have the same effect in each solution – OK, but the last three moves are not 'in phase'. Also, the ♔ helps to determine the sequence in (a) though not in (b). Maybe it's all been done before..." Despite assiduous searching, I managed to unearth no anticipations (let alone in miniature). Anyway, for interest's sake, here follow a couple of series-helpmate 'double castlers':

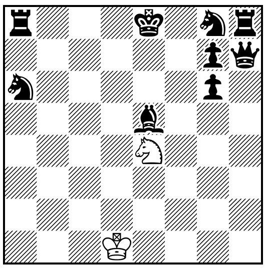
30A. John M. Rice: *British Chess Magazine*, 1971



Ser-H≠4

1.♞b7? 2.0-0-0 3.♛b8 4.♞c7, ♘b6≠??? But the ♘ is pinned!
So instead: **1.♝f7! 2.0-0 3.♛h8 4.♝g7, ♘e7≠**.

30B. Zvonimir Hernitz: *feenschach*, 1989



Ser-H≠5, 2 solutions

1.♞f6 2.♞d7 3.0-0-0 4.♝b8 5.♞c7, ♘d6≠;
1.♞h6 2.0-0 3.♛h8 4.♚h7 5.♜g8, ♘g5≠.

Unlike **30**, there is no 'ODT' in **30B**, which I think has a little too much Black deadwood in each phase {ed.}.

30 is a really lovely miniature twin {M}. Easy enough to solve, but a very entertaining neat and tidy castling twin {S}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, May/June 2004

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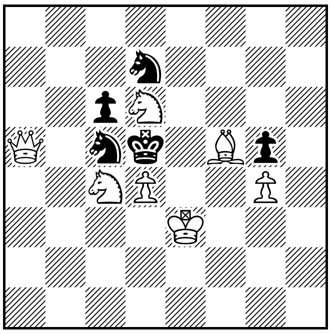
For the time being, I have decided to stop quoting already-published works by Australian problemists, because a great influx of fine original compositions has arrived in the BILLABONG's mailbag from countries as antipodean as Slovakia, Israel, Holland and Hungary! It's splendid that our humble outlet is being supported internationally, and the work of three new overseas contributors appears below; a very warm welcome to each of them. Cornelius Groeneveld was winning prizes for his problems way back in the 1950s; the Dutch veteran entertains us here with **31**, a delicate 'White to Play' situation which we hope proves to be unanticipated. **33**, by the prolific Israeli Leonid Makaronez, is not without its flaws, but they are amply compensated by the good play. Finally, from Hungary – the spiritual home of the helpmate – you will relish a nice H≠2 twin by one of its famed exponents, Attila Benedek. Solve the diagrammed setting of **34**, then set it up with ♚d5 and ♟e5 exchanging places, and solve again... This batch of originals is relatively straightforward, so do take pleasure in your leisurely headache-free decipherment!

31. Cornelius Groeneveld (Holland): Original

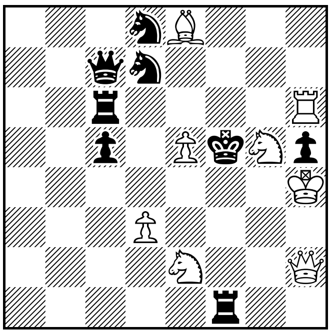


≠2 [set play]

1...♞d~ 2.♕×c5≠;
1.♕d8! (zz)
1...♞d~ 2.♘b6≠;
1...♞c~ 2.♕g8≠;
1...♞e6!? 2.♗e4≠.

(Note also the incidental try: 1.♗×d7? stalemate!) This is a sweet-and-simple *mutate* in Meredith – the mate set for 1...♞d~ is changed by the waiting key – which also shows *Black correction* after 1...♞e6!?. Fingers crossed that **31** is original {ed.}. An efficient Meredith setting with an unpinning key {Andy Sag [S]}. Where does the ♕ go? {Bob Meadley [M]}. This is a very nice mutate with one changed and two added mates. The ♗ cannot be on g4, which would save a ♙, because only on f5 does it stop the ♕ from mating on g5 after a move such as 1...♞b8 {Geoff Foster [F]}.

32v. David Shire (England): Original



≠2 [set play]

1...♜g6 2.♗×g6≠;
1...♜f4+ 2.♕×f4≠;
1...♞e6 2.♗g6≠;

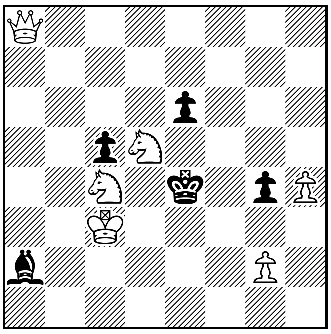
1.♘e6! (>2.♘g7)
1...♞7~ 2.♖f6≠; ❶
1...♜g1,♜f4+ 2.♕(×)f4≠; ❶
1...♜×e6 2.♖×h5(♗g6?)≠; ❷
1...♛×e5 2.♕h3(♘g3?)≠; ❷
1...♞×e6 2.♗g6(♖×h5?)≠; ❸
1...♞×e5 2.♘g3(♕h3?)≠. ❸

[Comments concerning **32**: **David Shire**: {♔g4, ♕g2, ♖g6, ♗d8, ♘f5,h4, ♙c3,d5; ♚e5, ♛b7, ♜b6,e1, ♞c7,c8, ♟b5,g3} ≠2 [set play]. 1...♜f6/♜×g6+/♞d6 2.♗×f6/♘×g6/♗f6≠; **1.♘d6!** (>2.♘f7) 1...♞7~/♜f1,♜e4+/♜×d6/♛×d5/♞×d6/♞×d5 2.♖e6/♕(×)e4/♖g5/♕×g3/♗f6/♘f3≠.]:

Consider the vectors b6–g6 and b7–g2. Then we can see three pairs of variations respectively involving White movement: ❶ *along* these lines; ❷ *off* these lines; and ❸ *interfering* on these lines. Alas: 1...♜e4+ is unprovided-for, perhaps explaining why **32** was rejected as a WCCT entry. However, it turns out that David originally submitted **32** to the PROBLEM BILLABONG by mistake, instead of his superior setting **32v**! {ed.}.

Nice variety, but **32** has an unprovided check {M}. **32**'s key generates a mate for the unprovided check but creates a twist for experienced solvers by eliminating a 'provided' check 1...♜×g6+ 2.♘×g6≠ {S}. **32** shows doubled pairs of *self-blocks* with *dual-avoidance*, one of them leading to *White interference* mates to boot – an entertaining problem with plenty of good play ... [but] the unprovided check is a pity. There is also a major dual after 1...♟b4: if ♟b5 were to be replaced by a ♝ then this would give an extra variation 1...♝e8 2.♘c4≠, but 1...♝e2+ would defeat the threat and bust the solution {F}.

33. Leonid Makaronez (Israel): Original

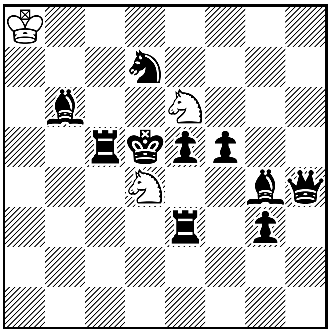


≠2

1.♕g8! (>2.♕×e6)
1...♚×d5 2.♕a8≠;
1...♚f5 2.♕h7≠;
1...♟×d5 2.♕×g4≠;
1...♟e5 2.♘d6≠.

Another unprovided flight, but the flight-giving key and the *switchback* by the ♕ after 1...♚×d5 are especially pretty {ed.}. **33** might be flawed but it near floored me! A solvers' problem {M}. Another efficient Meredith, the key of which engenders a mate for the unprovided flight while making amends by adding a sacrificial flight with a switchback {S}. I like this one. The key gives a flight, answered by a switchback mate. The four variations are all good and three of them end in model mates {F}.

34. Attila Benedek (Hungary): Original



H≠2; (b) ♚d5↔♟e5

(a) **1.♚e4 ♘g5+ 2.♚f4 ♘de6**≠;
(b) **1.♚d6 ♘b5+ 2.♚c6 ♘ed4**≠.

The ♚ wanders about in opposite directions, making all the Black moves in each phase; good stuff! {ed.}. The paradoxical idea is that a ♘ moves to the square vacated by the other ♘. However, it seems to me that several pieces are only needed for one of the solutions {F}. **34** is clever. Two ♘s in **31–34**: curious {M}. A true twin to be sure. I can't see a rôle for the ♛h4; the problem seems to be sound without it? I solved **34** in minutes but then spent hours trying to find a (cook preventing?) function for the ♛, without success {S}. Indeed, computer analysis reveals that **34**'s ♛ is totally redundant! Well spotted, Andy {ed.}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, July/August 2004

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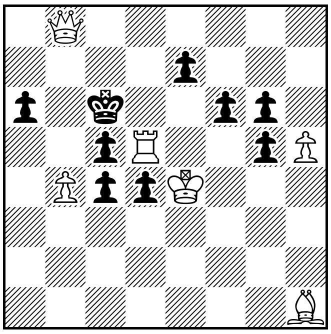
I heartily welcome to our BILLABONG three new overseas contributors – all of them quite renowned – Luke Neyndorff (U.S.A.), Viktor Volchek (Belarus), and Niharendu Sikdar (India); greetings also to local staunch problemist Geoff Foster, now displaying his perspicacity as a solver. Luke's **35** could well be a new task achievement: what might that be? David's helpmate **37** twins by 'swapping ends', i.e. rotate the position 180°, then solve again. **38**, by the fecund Indian Sikdar, is the BILLABONG's first *endgame study*: White to play and win. (Wouldn't it be nice if some game-players out there had a crack at solving it...) Anyway, I predict that this quartet of original compositions will cause solvers considerable brain-strain.

THE RECONSTRUCTION CHALLENGE. Regarding **29**, alas, there were no successful resettings tendered; but here is what I myself found: **29v**: **Christopher J. A. Jones & Ian Shanahan**: {♔h1, ♖f5, ♗f4, ♙c3; ♚c6, ♜g5, ♝b7,g3, ♞c2,d7, ♟c4,e7,f2} H≠3, 2 solutions (C+). (a) **1.♞d4** ♖**a5** **2.♜b5** ♙×**d4** **3.♜b6** ♙**d5**≠; (b) **1.♞b4** ♗**b8** **2.♝c7** ♙×**b4** **3.♝b6** ♙**b5**≠. Cooks with the ♚ at the board-edge are thwarted by check(mate) to the ♔h1 from ♝b7! Indeed, the function and placement of *every* man in **29v** merits careful analysis.

35. **Luke Neyndorff** (U.S.A.): Original

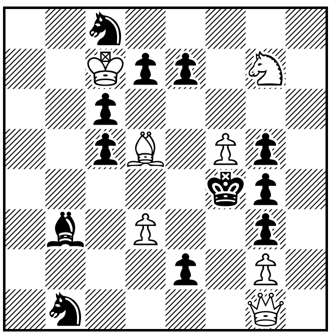


≠2

1.♖d8! (zz)
1...♟×b4 2.♔×d4≠;
1...♟c3 2.♔d3≠;
1...♟d3 2.♔e3≠;
1...♟f5+ 2.♔e5≠;
1...♟×h5 2.♔f5≠;
1...♟g4 2.♔f4≠;
1...♟a5 2.♙b5≠;
1...♟e~ 2.♖d6≠.

To quote the composer: "I hope this Royal battery task, after ♟ moves, hasn't been done before. There are <u>eight</u> ♟-unguards altogether." It is a pity that 1...♟f5+ has no set mate – an *unprovided check* {ed.}. Eight variations include six different ♔-moves to discover mate {Andy Sag [S]}. ♟g6/♙h5 gave a big key signal. 6 ♔-moves. Good! {Bob Meadley [M]}. This is quite a neat little problem, but the key has to provide for 1...♟f5+ and the mates aren't very exciting {Geoff Foster}.

36. **Leonid Makaronez & Viktor Volchek** (Israel / Belarus): Original

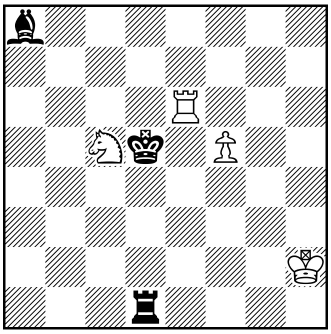


≠4

1.♗e6! (>2.♘h5+ ♚e5 3.♕e3≠), the principal variation being:
1...♟×e6 2.♕×c5 ♟e5 3.♕c1+ ♞d2 4.♕×d2≠.

36 needs work to get rid of the short threat and, if possible, other short variations. ♟c6 suggests ♗d5 is the key piece; maybe with reconstruction, that ♟ could be removed to improve the key? {S}. I will have to bow in defeat to these two composers. I will be more careful next time now that I know them {M}.

37. David Shire (England): Original

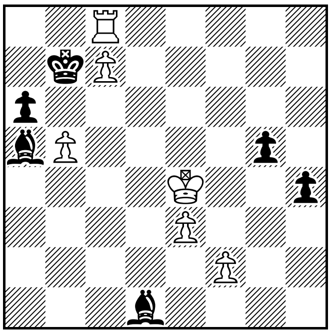


H≠3; (b) turn 180° (a1 = h8)

(a) **1.♝c6** ♖**e7 2.♚d6** ♙**f6 3.♜d5** ♘**e4≠**;
(b) **1.♜e5** ♖**c3 2.♚d4** ♔**b6 3.♝e4** ♘**e2≠**.

Tolkien loved the Shire and so do I! Top class stuff {M}. A neat miniature twin helpmate. ♔ has a rôle in (b) only {S}.

38. Niharendu Sikdar (India): Original



Win

1.♙**×a6+ ♚×c8 2.**♙**a7 ♝c2+ 3.**♔**d5!** (not 3.♔f3? ♟g4+! 4.♔f4 ♝×c7+ 5.♔×g4 ♚b7) **3...♝b3+ 4.**♔**c6!** (not 4.♔c5? ♝b6+! 5.♔×b6 ♝d5 wins) **4...♝a4+ 5.**♔**c5! ♝b4+!** (now 5...♝b6+ fails) **6.**♔**d5 ♝b3+ 7.**♔**d4!** (and not at once 7.♔e4? ♝c2+ 8.♔f3 ♟g4+! 9.♔f4 ♝d6+! 10.♔×g4 ♝e4 wins) **7...♝c3+ 8.**♔**e4! ♝c2+ 9.**♔**f3 ♝d1+** (9...♟g4+ 10.♔f4 wins this time) **10.**♔**g2 ♟h3+ 11.**♔**g3! ♝e5+ 12.**♙**f4!** (this special power, the double step, of the ♙ on its starting rank is the unique reason why White wins!) **12...♟×f4+ 13.**♙**×f4** and at last White wins, but not the careless 13.♔f2? ♟×e3+ 14.♔×e3 ♝d4+! 15.♔×d4 ♝f3 and instead it is Black who wins.

Whew! {ed.}. Lots of lovely dancing around e4, the crucial square {M}. After 13.♙×f4 Black has no more safe checks nor can Black get a ♝ onto the long white diagonal unmolested so can no longer avoid White promoting to ♕, winning {S}.

[NB: There was no **PROBLEM BILLABONG** in *Australian Chess* Vol.2 No.5, September/October 2004.]

PROBLEM BILLABONG, November/December 2004

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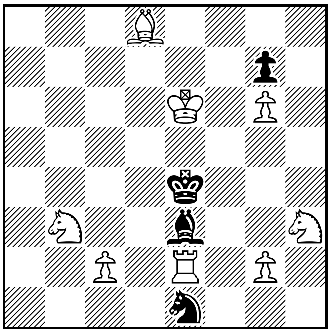
Apologies for the absence of our BILLABONG from the previous issue, and also for the missing solutions [in the original publication]: I shall definitely catch up next time! Anyway, let's turn now to this month's original problems, which include a 'mini-invasion' from Slovakia featuring those well-known newcomers Ladislav Salai, sr and Jozef Ložek: Ladislav's etiolated **39** involves typically Eastern-European pattern-play, whereas Jozef's **41** is a 'dark doings' helpmate task pitting the entire Black force against just a ♔ and ♙! Not that there is any combativeness in helpmates, where instead Black *assists* White to mate (here on White's 4th move, Black beginning in two distinct ways); and yes, there are indeed *four* ♝s in **41**, a festschrift dedicated to the composer of **39** – born 19.8.1934 – upon his 70th birthday. Leonid Makaronez returns with **40**, a selfmate in 5: in this ancient 'masochistic' genre, White forces an unwilling Black to mate White on Black's 5th move. Finally, welcome to Leonid's compatriot Michael Grushko – another Israeli chess-artist making his debut in the BILLABONG. Michael's **42** is a cute series-helpmate in 12: Black plays 12 consecutive moves to reach a position where White can immediately checkmate. I do hope you enjoy solving this BILLABONG's offerings, which emphasizes rather more heterodoxy than usual!

39. Ladislav Salai, sr. (Slovakia): Original



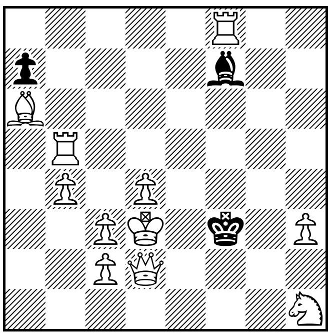
≠2 [3 tries]

1.♗g5? (>2.♘f2[A], ♖×e3 {2.♘g5?[B]})
1...♞×g2![a]
1.♗b6? (>2.♘d2[C], ♖×e3 {2.♘c5?[D]})
1...♞×c2![b]
1.♗f6? (>2.♘d2[C], ♘c5[D])
1...♞×g2[a],♞d3 2.♘d2[C]≠;
1...♞×c2[b],♞f3 2.♘c5[D]≠;
1...♟×f6!

1.♗c7! (>2.♘f2[A], ♘g5[B])
1...♞×g2[a],♞d3 2.♘g5[B]≠;
1...♞×c2[b],♞f3 2.♘f2[A]≠.

The composer mentions the *Fleck theme* – i.e. separation of at least *three* threats into single mates within one phase – but here only *pairs* are separated, so no Fleck theme at all; and the positional symmetry detracts. In the first two tries, though, one does see *threat-avoidance* (the basic ingredient of the in-vogue *Sushkov theme*) {ed.}. The double threat is completely separated by the variations {Andy Sag [S]}.

40. Leonid Makaronez (Israel): Original

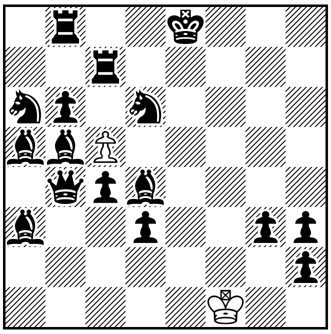


S≠5

1.♕e2+! ♚f4 2.♕h2+ ♚f3
3.♖b6 ♟×b6 4.♗c4 ♟b5
5.♕d2 ♟×c4≠.

White has to lose a move somewhere and the ♕ delivers {Bob Meadley [M]}.

41. Jozef Ložek (Slovakia): Original
~ Dedicated to Ladislav Salai (70th birthday) ~

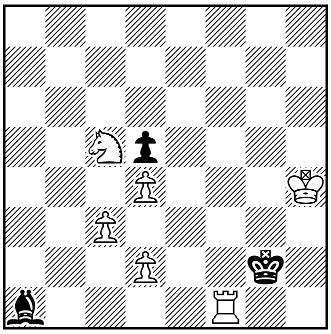


H≠4, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♝f2 ♙c6 2.♜f7 ♙c7 3.♜d8 ♙c8♕ 4.♜f8 ♕e6≠**;
(b) **1.♞f7 ♙×b6 2.♛f8 ♙×c7 3.♝e7 ♙×b8♕ 4.♝ad8 ♕×b5≠**.

A fine 'dark doing' (confirmed sound by my computer), where the promoted ♝s – normally regarded as *outré* – do not offend {ed.}. Bill Whyatt and Frank Ravenscroft played with this theme and, if memory serves, Whyatt told Frank that he was giving it away [after several unsuccessful attempts] as it was impossible to get sound. Obviously Josef Ložek does not agree. Of course analysing why all the Black 'forest' is necessary is a task in itself {M}. In each case, Black's first move [B1] blocks the f-file to allow Black a non-checking second move [B2] {S}.

42v. Ian Shanahan & Michael Grushko (Australia / Israel): Original



Ser-H≠16

**1.♝b2 2.♝a3 3.♝b4 4.♝a5 5.♝c7
6.♝e5 7.♝×d4 8.♝e5 9.♟d4 10.♟×c3 ...
12.♟c1♞ ... 14.♞f2 15.♚f3 16.♚f4, ♖×f2≠**.

[Comments in relation to **42**: **Michael Grushko**: {♔h4, ♖f1, ♗f5, ♙c3,d2,d4; ♚e2, ♝c1, ♟d5} Ser-H≠12. **1.♝a3 ... 3.♝×d4 4.♝e5 5.♟d4 6.♟×c3 ... 8.♟c1♞ ... 10.♞f2 11.♚f3 12.♚f4, ♖×f2≠**.]:

If Michael can keep this up he will be a super star! The many 13-move tries with the ♗ mating on h3 are classy and I even had the ♚ mated on b2 or h1 just failing. One of the very best series-movers {M}. It's cute all right; two near-misses in 13 with the ♚ on g2 and h1 respectively got me right off the track for a while. Another feasible scenario that also retains the ♙d2 has ♚ on b2 and ♖b1≠, but in too many moves {S}.

In studying **42**, at first I wondered why the composer hadn't worked in an extra move by starting the ♝c1 on a1. Then I realized that the abovementioned 'tries' – NB: their move-orders are variable, so they are really only 'cook-attempts' – seem more plausible with ♝c1. It is regrettable, however, that the (solution's) mate is not quite *ideal*: g4 is doubly guarded. So **42v** is a resetting (C+) which achieves such economy in the mate, and with a longer – perhaps more geometrically interesting? – solution. (Note that here the ♚ must *not* start on e2, as in **42** – otherwise the problem would be unsound.) I am curious to ascertain which version the author himself prefers! [Mr Grushko e-mailed his preference for **42v**, under joint authorship as above] {ed.}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, January/February 2005

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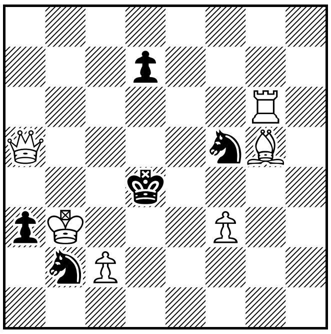
There are no unfamiliar problemists contributing to the BILLABONG this time around, yet there may still be a few surprises in store! What is the unifying factor in David's **43**? The prolific Leonid's **44** is finely keyed. Solve Christopher's H≠3, **45**, as diagrammed (remembering that *Black* begins, conspiring with White to mate the ♚), then reset it with a ♛ on g6 instead of the ♞, and solve again. Finally, a *long* series-helpmate, **46** – but still well short of the current length record! – from our Indian friend Niharendu: Black plays 50 consecutive moves, reaching a position where White may mate on the move; this is not as fearsome as it sounds... Enjoy your solving!

43. **David Shire** (England): Original

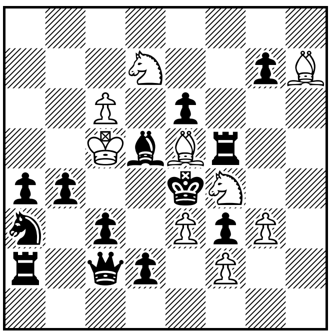


≠2 [set play]

1...♞e3 2.♗f6≠;
1...♟d5 2.♕c3≠;
1.♗d2! (>2.♖g4)
1...♞e3 2.♗c3≠;
1...♞g3,♞d6,♞h6 2.♖(×)d6≠;
1...♞d3 2.♙c3≠;
1...♟d5 2.♕c3≠.

The "unifying factor" in David's **43** is three distinct mates *all on c3*, each in response to a Black *self-block*. With one changed mate thrown in (after 1...♞e3), this is classy! Sadly, the ♟a3 is required to stop a cook by 1.♗c1. Also, I'd be inclined to shift the whole position one square to the right in order to eliminate the unwanted defence 1...♞h6; but the ♟d7 cannot be resited on d6 (to stop 1...♞d6), since 1.♖e6 would then cook it {ed.}. Three self-block defences met by different mates from c3 {Andy Sag [S]}. The ♖ brings pressure on rank and file after the key {Bob Meadley [M]}.

44. **Leonid Makaronez** (Israel): Original

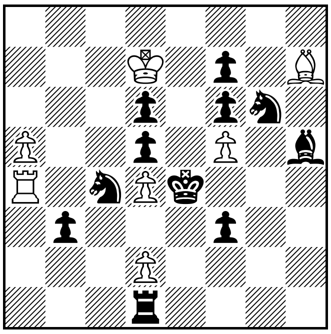


≠3

1.♗×g7! (>2.♘f6+ ♚e5 3.♘g6≠)
1...♝b3+ 2.♔×b4 ~ 3.♘c5≠;
1...♝c4+ 2.♔b6 ~ 3.♘c5≠;
1...♝×c6+ 2.♔×c6 ~ 3.♘c5≠.

A good key-move invites checks to the ♔, but the problem seems rather heavy for the content {ed.}. The key allows three discovered checks from the pinned ♜ each with a different escape for the ♔ to avoid further checks while vacating c5 for the mating ♘ {S}. The key started as a try and ended up the key. His **36** (with Volchek) was better {M}.

45. Christopher J. A. Jones (England): Original

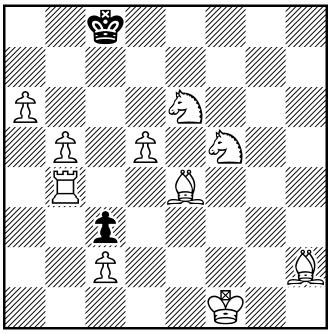


H≠3; (b) ♛g6

(a) **1.♞f4 ♔e7 2.♞e3 ♔×f6 3.♞×f5 ♗×f5≠**;
(b) **1.♞e5+ ♔×d6 2.♛g1 ♔c5 3.♛×d4 ♖×d4≠**.

Lovely harmony! – showing a perfect *orthogonal-diagonal transformation* (or *ODT* for short). Christopher Jones has a world-wide reputation for composing really-hard-to-solve helpmates, and this has proven so here {ed.}. I had a pretty tough time with **45**. Very difficult – about 8 hours all up. It was hard to prefigure the mates, and the ♙a5 and ♜d1 are good decoys. 10 out of 10 {M}. After struggling with part (a) for two weeks and eventually finding the solution, part (b) took only 5 minutes to solve once the thematic idea was established {S}.

46. Niharendu Sikdar (India): Original



Ser-H≠50

1.♚d7 ... 4.♚g6 ... 7.♚h3 8.♚×h2 9.♚h3 ... 16.♚c8 ... 20.♚a5 21.♚×b4 22.♚×b5 23.♚×a6 24.♚b7 ... 28.♚f7 29.♚f6 30.♚e5 31.♚×e4 32.♚×d5 33.♚c4 34.♚b4 ... 36.♚b2 37.♚×c2 38.♚d1 39.♟c2 40.♟c1♜ 41.♜c2 42.♚d2 43.♚d3 44.♚e4 45.♚f3 46.♚g4 47.♚h3 ... 49.♚h1 50.♜h2, ♘g3≠.

A fine ♚-trek – although the surviving ♘e6 (necessary for accurate ♚-play) regrettably precludes the mate from being *ideal*. Mr Sikdar writes: “This may be a length record for a Meredith setting [i.e. one having 8–12 men] with at least four phases of play [‘phases’ in this context meaning ‘sequential moves by the same man’: 1–38; 39–41; 42–49; and 50]” {ed.}. Sometimes a mate can be given with only two ♘s!? {M}. Long, but quite straightforward {S}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, March/April 2005

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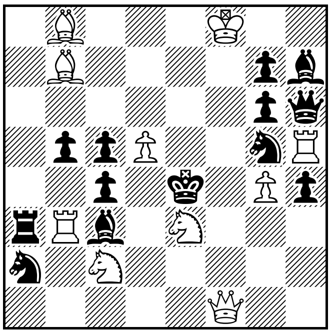
For this issue, the BILLABONG is all-European, and we greet three new-chums: the famous miniaturist Vladimir Kozhakin (from Magadan in the Russian far-east) who proffers **48**, a sweet lightweight ≠3; Henryk Grudziński (whose 6er **49** is decidedly tricky); and Bernd Gräfrath (with **50** – an harmonious miniature two-solution H≠3, in which a cooperative *Black* begins so that White can mate the ♚ on White's 3rd move). I trust you will have fun in your solving!

THE 2004 COMPETITIONS: There were no novice composers venturing forth in the BILLABONG during 2004, alas, so all of the donated prize-fund ($120) goes to our top solver for the year, *Andy Sag*, who correctly unravelled and commented upon every problem. Congratulations Andy! Bob Meadley – equally industrious – ran a very close race, but was 'pipped at the post' only on account of **36** (by Makaronez & Volchek), over which Bob came a cropper. The solving contest for 2005 should prove interesting...

COMPOSING TOURNEY 2003–2005: I have been fortunate to procure the services of the universally esteemed British IM *Barry P. Barnes*, who will judge all original problems published in the BILLABONG over this triennium. [The award is not yet published (June 2008).]

47. David Shire (England): Original

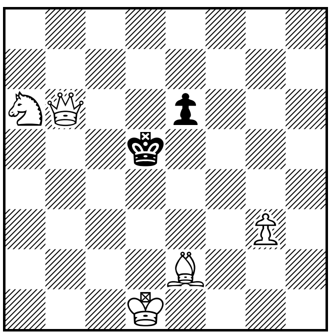


≠2

1.♘d1! (>2.♕e2)
1...♝c~(d2) 2.♘f2(♕f4?)≠;
1...♝e5!? 2.♙d6(♕f4?)≠;
1...♝d4!? 2.♕f4≠;
1...♞g~ 2.♙d6≠;
1...♞f3!? 2.♘f2≠;
1...♞e6+!? 2.♙×e6≠;
1...♞c1 2.♘×c3≠.

Reciprocal correction manifests itself through the underscored variations; the composer adds: "You will notice a technical point in relation to the thematic ♝c3 and ♞g5: 1...♝~/♞~ 2.♕f3?/♕f4? – a kind of 'constructional' *dual-avoidance*. It amused me anyway..." {ed.}. Two of the mates are key-generated while the rest are present in the set position; Black's check avoids a dual {Andy Sag [S]}. Two good tries are 1.♘f5? (which for some time I thought to be the key) and 1.♘×c4? {Bob Meadley [M]}. I could not see why a ♝ is needed on h7 when a ♟ would do the same job {Arthur Willmott [W]}. True – but this anomaly is explained by David Shire himself: "♝h7 can be ♟h7, but doubled g- and h♟s looked unpleasant..." Fair enough {ed.}.

48. Vladimir Kozhakin (Russia): Original



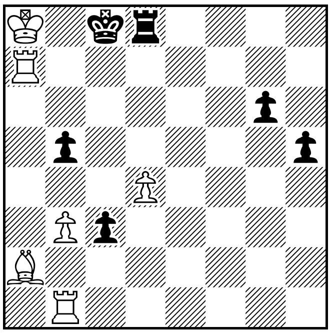
≠3 [2 tries]

1.♘b4+?
1...♚e4 2.♕f2 ♚e5 3.♕f4≠;
2...♟e5 3.♗d3≠;
1...♚e5!
1.♗d3? 1...♚e5!

1.♕c7! (zz)
1...♟e5 2.♕d7+ ♚e4 3.♕d3≠;
1...♚e4 2.♕f4+ ♚d5 3.♗f3≠;
1...♚d4 2.♕f4+ ♚c3 3.♕b4≠;
2...♚d5 3.♗f3≠.

Good content for the force employed {ed.}. A neat miniature; the key move takes away one flight square but gives another {W}. A nice clean miniature with a give-and-take key {S}. Lovely indeed with four different ♚ mating squares and four different mates {M}.

49. Henryk Grudziński (Poland): Original

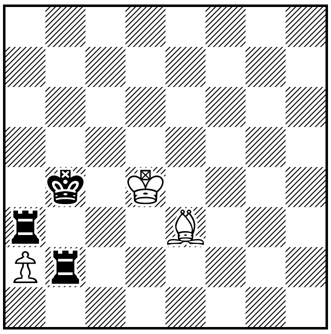


≠6 [2 tries]

1.♖f1? (>2.♖ff7 & 3.♖c7)
1...♜d7 2.♖f8+ ♜d8 3.♖ff7 ♜d6 4.♖fb7 ♜b6 5.♖×b6 ♟c2 6.♖b8≠; &
dual 4.♙b4 (>5.♖f8+ ♜d8 6.♗e6) 4...♜f6 5.♖×f6 ♟c2 6.♖f8≠;
1...♟c2! (2.-6.?)
1.♙b4? (>2.♗e6+ ♜d7 3.♗×d7+ ♚d8 4.♖e1 ♟c2 5.♖e8)
1...♜e8! 2.♖f1 ♟c2! 3.♗e6+ ♚d8!! 4.♖d7+ ♚c8 5.♖e7 ♚d8! 6.?
1.♖e1! (>2.♖ee7 & 3.♖c7)
1...♟c2 2.♙b4! (>3.♗e6+ ♜d7 4.♗×d7+ ♚d8 5.♖e8≠ & 3.♖ee7 ♟c1♛ 4.♗e6+ ♜d7 5.♖e8)
2...♜f8,♜h8 3.♖ee7 (>4.♖eb7 & 5.♖b8) 3...♟c1♛ 4.♗e6+ ♚d8 5.♖ad7+ ♚c8 6.♖d5,♖d6≠;
2...♜g8 3.♗×g8 ♚d8 4.♗f7 ♟c1♛ 5.♖e8≠;
1...♜d7 2.♖e8+ ♜d8 3.♖8e7 ♜d6 4.♖eb7 ♜b6 5.♖×b6 ♟c2 6.♖b8≠.

There is a proliferation of threats and (short) post-key variations not all listed above {ed.}. I can't be certain about this, but 1.♖e1 is my choice [of key] {M}. Very tedious and boring trying to find all the different lines; I spent far too long on this {W}. No easy way to solve this, just lots of hard slog {S}.

50. Bernd Gräfrath (Germany): Original



H≠3, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♜a5 ♗c1 2.♚a4 ♔c4 3.♜b3 ♙×b3**≠;
(b) **1.♜ab3 ♙×b3 2.♚a3 ♔c3 3.♜a2 ♗c5**≠.

Two distinct *ideal mates*, the ♙ and ♗ exchanging guard- and mating-rôles between the two solutions (i.e. a *funktionwechsel*) {ed.}. The ♙ captures a ♜ on b3 in one solution and the other ♜ on the same square in the second; an interesting problem to solve {W}. Another immortal 50th. I'll bet modern composers and those of yesteryear are sorry this one got away from them! {M}. Another fine miniature, pairing diagonal mates on Black and White squares [which would yield a precise *chameleon-echo* – if only the mating-nets were identical]. **50** might be even more harmonious with a ♗ instead of ♙ but that would need a different setting. In (b) it must be a ♙ to make ♜a2 a necessary self-block {S}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, May/June 2005

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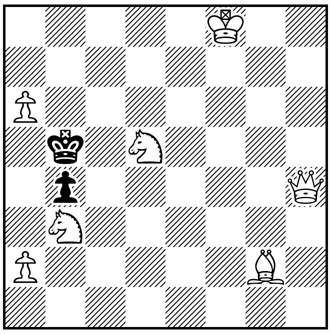
This episode of the BILLABONG saga warmly welcomes our eminent problem veteran from South Australia, Arthur Willmott, in his dual rôle as a crack solver/commentator and a composer: Arthur's **54** requires White to play 6 consecutive moves, then Black likewise, reaching a position where White can stalemate Black in 1! (Well you might scratch your head in trying to nut this one out...) We are also happy to receive into the fold a second 'lion of Israel', Leonid Ljubashevskij, co-composer with Leonid Makaronez of the hefty **52**. And fellow Israeli Michael Grushko returns to our BILLABONG with **53**, a 4-solution helpmate in "2½": this is just a helpmate in 3 where one discards the initial Black move; remember that the play is *cooperative* throughout, with checkmate of Black being achieved on White's 3rd move. Finally, Niharendu Sikdar's elegant 2er **51** parades an antique theme – what might it be? – in modern garb; NB: there are 2 solutions (and 4 thematic tries) here. As ever, enjoy your solving!

51. **Niharendu Sikdar** (India): Original



≠2, 2 solutions [4 tries]

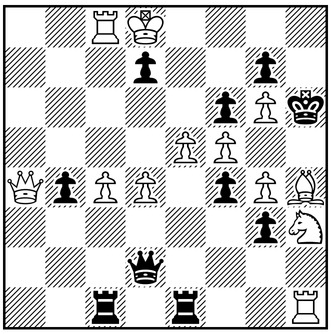
1.♕c4+?
1...♚a4 2.♕×b4≠;
1...♚×c4!
1.♕d4? (zz)
1...♚a4 2.♕×b4≠;
1...♚×a6 2.♕b6≠;
1...♚c6!

1.♕f6? (zz)
1...♚c4 2.♕f1≠;
1...♚a4!
1.♔e7? (zz)
1...♚a4 2.♕×b4≠;
1...♚c6 2.♕c4≠;
1...♚×a6!

1.♕e7! (zz)
1...♚a4 2.♕×b4≠;
1...♚×a6 2.♗f1≠;
1...♚c4 2.♕e2≠;
1...♚c6 2.♘d4≠; &
1.♕d8! (zz)
1...♚a4 2.♕a5≠;
1...♚×a6 2.♕b6≠;
1...♚c4 2.♗f1≠;
1...♚c6 2.♘c3≠.

The "antique theme" is *star-flights*, here with all four mates completely changed between the two solutions! This marvellous problem parades 9 distinct mates in all, and each of the ♚'s four moves also refutes a try {ed.}. This is an amazingly good problem, good enough for any column in the world. ... Two solutions is the ideal format, because the solutions are so well matched. Also, a conventional try-and-key format would result in one less mate, because the try would have to be refuted by one of the star-flights. I especially liked 1.♕d8! ♚c6 2.♘c3≠ (not 2.♘c7?), a beautiful battery mate. Also the mate 2.♗f1 is transferred to a different defence. The only (very minor) criticism is that the ♔ takes no part in the post-key play, although 1.♔e7? is a good try. It's a pity that the ♔ can't be used on a2, b2 or c2 in place of the ♙a2 {Geoff Foster}. Two-solution 2ers are not usually viewed with great favour, but this one exploits the primordial star-flight theme comprehensively {Andy Sag [S]}. A nice change-mate {Bob Meadley [M]}. I could only find 3 tries; I consider a checking move not to be a try. A pity that the ♔ takes no part in the play after the two solutions {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

52. **Leonid Makaronez & Leonid Ljubashevskij** (Israel): Original



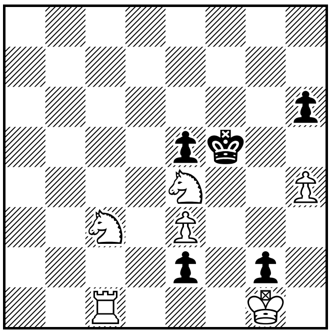
≠3 [3 tries]

1.♔c7?
1...♜×c4+!
1.♔×d7?
1...♛×d4+!
1.♔e7?
1...♜×e5+!

1.♕d1! (>2.♙g5+ ♟×g5 3.♗×g5≠)
1...♜c×d1 2.♔c7 ~ 3.♖h8≠;
1...♛e2 2.♔×d7 ~ 3.♖h8≠;
1...♜e×d1 2.♔e7 ~ 3.♖h8≠;
1...♛×d1 2.♗g5+ ♟×g5 3.♘g1≠;
1...♜e2 2.♗g5+ ♟×g5 3.♘f2≠;
1...♟f3 2.♕×d2+ ♜e3 3.♕×e3≠.

The swooping sacrificial key is delightful, despite the ♕a4 being out-of-play {ed.}. A very nice triple sacrifice key {W}. Clever key and very topical using the ♕ as a 'suicide bomber'! {S}. Her Majesty thrusts into Black's vitals! Reminiscent of the Anderssen classic 5er in the *Illustrated London News* 14 January 1846 {M}.

53. Michael Grushko (Israel): Original



H≠2½, 4 solutions

(a) **1...♘g5 2.♟e4 ♘c×e4 3.♚e5 ♖c5≠**;
(b) **1...♘d1 2.♟×d1♝ ♖c6 3.♝g4 ♘g3≠**;
(c) **1...♘×e2 2.♚g4 ♖c4 3.♚h3 ♘f2≠**;
(d) **1...♘b5 2.♚e6 ♘g5+ 3.♚d5 ♙e4≠**.

This chap is a wonderful solvers' composer: he caters for beauty. I had plenty of heartache with (b) {M}. Omit ♟g2, move the ♔ to e1, and there is a fifth solution {W}. ♟h6 prevents 3...♘g5 in (c) and ♟g2 prevents 1...♔h1,♔h2 2.♚g4 ♖g1+ 3.♚f3 ♖g3≠ {S}.

54. Arthur Willmott (Australia): Original

{♔d7, ♕f2, ♖c3,g2 ♗c1, ♙d3,e2; ♚e5, ♜b4,e4, ♝d5, ♞d4} Double Ser-H=6. **Intention**: **1.♙e3 2.♕a2 3.♕a7 4.♖a2 5.♖a5 6.♗a3**; **1.♜b6 2.♞b5 3.♜b4 4.♝c4 5.♚d5 6.♚c5**, ♙×c4=. Alas, Bob Meadley has discovered this **cook**: 1.♙×e4 2.♙×d5 3.♙d6 4.♖g4 5.♖×d4 6.♖×b4; 1.♚d5 2.♚e5 3.♚d5 4.♚e5 5.♚d5 6.♚e5, ♕f3=. Perhaps **54** can be fixed by adding the condition "no captures during the White series"? Over to you, Arthur {ed.}. [No correction has been forthcoming.]

Parallel Strategy: 156 Chess Compositions *by Peter Wong, self-published, 118 pp, A$29.95*

[**Book Review** by Dr Ian Shanahan]

Any book by an Australian chess problemist is a *rara avis*, and always most welcome. But one this good (the *only* Australian chess book of 2004!) is indeed a cause for celebration – and cerebration. Peter Wong, one of Australia's very best problemists ever, is at the cutting edge of chess composition internationally, and this book brings together 156 representative examples of his work. Peter's *oeuvre* ranges from the traditional 'mate in 2' through to the highly exotic (invoking special rules and/or pieces – heart-attack material, one might think, for the average over-the-board player!). But the text assumes no prerequisite knowledge from the reader, and explains everything with total lucidity. So much so that **Parallel Strategy** is not just an anthology of the author's output, but is also an excellent textbook on problem composition itself – particularly since each chapter is devoted to a specific genre (including comparator positions by other composers) and the content of every problem is thoroughly analysed. I also enjoyed very much the "further comments" at the ends of chapters: these are less impersonal in tone – here Peter weighs the merits of a chapter's problems against each other, frequently at odds with judges' determinations! – and embraces an amusing anecdote or two. However, one foreign reviewer has criticized the book's structure whereby problems' solutions are grouped together after these "further comments", rather than accompanying the diagrams themselves. I disagree: with Peter's approach, one is encouraged to *solve* each problem, or to set it up on a board for deeper scrutiny (although this could be difficult whenever a problem calls for a 'zoo' or 'swarm' of fairy pieces). In any case, though the book is self-published, it is utterly professional in its presentation and substance; the intelligently annotated bibliography is icing on the cake. I cannot find flaw with this marvellous book – go ahead and buy it!

Very Highly Recommended

[from *Australian Chess* Vol.3 No.3, May/June 2005, p.40]

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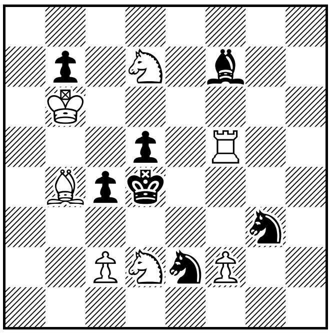
We have an Anglo-Australian BILLABONG for this issue, but no newcomers... **56** and **57** are twins: solve the diagram position; set it up again, making the appropriate position-changes for part (b); then re-solve! **56**, typical of its composer, is a helpmate in 3 – Black plays first, and both sides cooperate so that White mates on his 3rd move – whereas in Geoff Foster's **57** (a classic example of its kind by *the* master in this thematic field), Black plays 20 consecutive moves so as to attain a position in which White stalemates Black in 1. I am truly honoured to be its dedicatee. (Geoff and I independently discovered **57**'s basic matrix, but Geoff alone went on to complete a problem out of it.) Technically, Arthur Willmott's **58** is a "proof-game in 10½": you are merely required to work out the moves played to reach this position, given that White just played his 11th. Who can name the theme it exhibits? Have fun!

GREMLINS ATTACK THE BILLABONG! In our previous column, **54** was subjected to *two* errors: its position as submitted had a ♜b5 *which should instead be on b4*; and the stipulation above **54**'s diagram ought to have been *Double Series-helpstalemate in 6* (i.e. White makes 6 consecutive moves, then Black likewise, reaching a position where White can stalemate Black in 1). I shall withhold **54**'s solution until next time, so that solvers can have another chance at cracking it.

55. David Shire (England): Original



≠2 [set play, 3 tries]

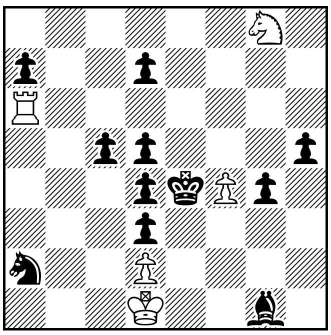
1...♞c3,♟c3 2.♗c5≠;
1...♞e4 2.♘f3≠;

1.♖f3? (>2.♗c5)
1...♞e4!
1.♘f6? (>2.♘f3)
1...♟c3 2.♗c5≠;
1...♝h5 2.♖×d5≠;
1...♞g1!
1.♘e5? (>2.♘ef3)
1...♞g1 2.♙c3≠;
1...♝h5!

1.♘c5! (>2.♘f3)
1...♞g1 2.♙c3≠;
1...♟c3 2.♘cb3≠;
1...♝h5 2.♘e6≠.

Self-blocks, White self-obstruction, changed mates with fine economy: straightforward yet stylish – even if not spectacularly original {ed.}. A preliminary try is 1.♖f3? but this is refuted by 1...♞e4! because the ♖ has blocked f3. The ♘d7 then makes two tries and the key, with changed play after the defences 1...♝h5 and 1...♟c3. I especially liked how the key blocks c5, in a manner similar to the ♖-try. The problem has elements of white correction and threat correction {Geoff Foster}. A good changed mate after 1...♟c3 {Andy Sag [S]}. A game position with a trappy key {Bob Meadley [M]}. I had trouble finding the set-play {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

56. Christopher J. A. Jones (England): Original

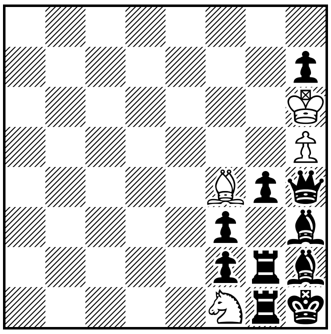


H≠3; (b) ♟d5→b5

(a) **1.♝e3** ♙×e3 **2.♚f5** ♙e4+ **3.♟×e4** ♖f6≠;
(b) **1.♞c3+** ♙×c3 **2.♚d5** ♙c4+ **3.♟×c4** ♘f6≠.

Sweet echoed play {ed.}. The solutions are nicely harmonized, but the ♔, ♝, ♟a7,d7,g4,h5 take no part in (b) {W}. A nice twin! {S}. The humble d♙ is king! {M}.

57. **Geoffrey Foster** (Australia): Original
~ Dedicated to Ian Shanahan ~



Ser-H=20; (b) ♗f1

(a) **1.♜g3 2.♜1g2 3.♝g1 4.♜h2 5.♝g2 6.♜hh3 7.♝h2 8.♚g1 9.♝h1 10.♚g2 11.♝g1 12.♜h2 13.♚h3 14.♜gg2 15.♛g3 16.♚h4 17.♜h3 18.♛h2 19.♜hg3 20.♚h3**, ♗g5=;

(b) **1.♝g3 2.♚h2 3.♜h1 4.♜gg1 5.♝g2 6.♚h3 7.♝h2 8.♛g3 9.♚h4 10.♛h3 11.♝g3 12.♜h2 13.♝h1 14.♜hg2 15.♝h2 16.♜g3 17.♜1g2 18.♝g1 19.♛h2 20.♚h3**, ♗g5=.

There is only one word for Geoff's 'follow-my-leader' twin: MASTERFUL {ed.}. What can one say? How GF worked this out and the time taken is on a level few can reach {M}. A great problem, one of GF's best. To solve both parts I set up what seemed to be the logical stalemate position and worked backwards {W}. Another clever twin {S}.

58. **Arthur Willmott** (Australia): Original

{♔e1, ♕d1, ♖a1,h1 ♗c1,f1, ♘b1,c8, ♙b2,c2,d2,e2; ♚e8, ♜h8, ♞b8,g8, ♟a7,c7,d7,f7,h7} PG 10½. **Intention**: **1.♙a4 ♟g5 2.♙a5 ♟g4 3.♙a6 ♟g3 4.♙×b7 ♟×h2 5.♙×a8♘ ♟×g1♜ 6.♘b6 ♜×g2 7.♘×c8 ♜×f2 8.♘×e7 ♜f5 9.♘×f5 ♝e7 10.♘×e7 ♛c8 11.♘×c8**. Unfortunately for Arthur – who seems to be short on problemistic luck at the moment – Andy Sag (who sympathetically writes "sorry Arthur") demonstrates a ruinous **cook**: 1.♙a4 ♟e5 2.♙a5 ♛h4 3.♙a6 ♛×h2 4.♙×b7 ♛×g2 5.♙f3 ♛×f3 6.♘×f3 ♞a6 7.♙×c8♕+ ♜×c8 8.♘×e5 ♟g6 9.♘×g6 ♝e7 10.♘×e7 ♞b8 11.♘×c8. Arthur's intended solution shows the *Frolkin theme* by Black: a promotee is captured during the course of play {ed.}. A simple-looking position with a complex solution: an Australian classic {M} ... if it can be repaired {ed.}. [No correction has been forthcoming.]

PROBLEM BILLABONG, September/October 2005

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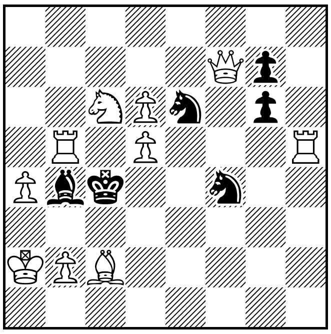
Welcome to new contributor Ivan Bryukhanov from the Ukraine: his series-selfmate **61** requires solvers to play 16 consecutive White moves whereafter Black is *forced* to mate White in one. Another series-mover stipulation new to the BILLABONG – series-mate – can be seen in Arthur's clear-cut **62**, in which White makes 10 successive moves, the last of which mates Black (who does not move at all); this problem also invokes the commonplace Fairy variant CIRCE Chess, which I shall now explain. In **CIRCE**, whenever a man is captured it is 'reborn' on that man's game-array square of the same colour, a ♙♟ being resurrected on its starting-square from the same file; however, should the rebirth square be already occupied, then the captured man simply disappears, as in normal chess. (In **62**, if Black played ♚×d7 for example, then the ♘ would rematerialize on b1; if ♟e3 were captured, it would re-emerge on e7.) **59** – whose 'geographical' theme we have encountered before: what is its name? – and **60** are the usual elegant fare we have come to expect from their regularly-contributing creators. I do hope you take pleasure in solving this quartet!

59. David Shire (England): Original



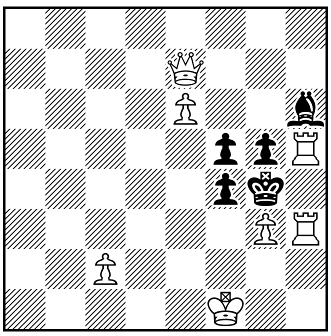
≠2 [1 try]

1.♕a7? (>2.♘e5, ♖×b4)
1...♝c3 2.♙b3≠;
1...♞d3 2.♗b3≠;
1...♝d6 2.♘a5≠;
1...♝c5!

1.♖h3! (>2.♙b3, ♗b3)
1...♞d4 2.♘e5≠;
1...♞c5 2.♖×b4≠;
1...♞×h3 2.♕f1≠.

The *Odessa theme* – i.e. pairs of threats in one phase become mates in another, and vice-versa – unified by self-blocking thematic defences. And all Black *pieces* defend. 2.♕f1≠ is icing on the cake! {ed.}. The try 1.♕a7? guards c5 and d4, with self-block defences on c3 and d3. The key 1.♖h3! guards c3 and d3, with self-block defences on c5 and d4. To make this Odessa scheme work, the composer has to find self-block defences which defeat both threats – quite a difficult and confusing thing to arrange. I found this theme intriguing, so I decided to look at some other examples. **9** [also by David Shire] is a much more interesting example, showing a Nowotny, a Grimshaw and dual-avoidance self-blocks [after the try]... {Geoff Foster}. Defensive ♞-moves block flights or open lines for the ♕ after the key {Andy Sag [S]}. Odessa theme I think {Bob Meadley [M]}. A nice key sacrifice with a double threat {Arthur Willmott [W]} ... although the key-♖ is already doubly *en prise* beforehand {ed.}.

60. Leonid Makaronez (Israel): Original

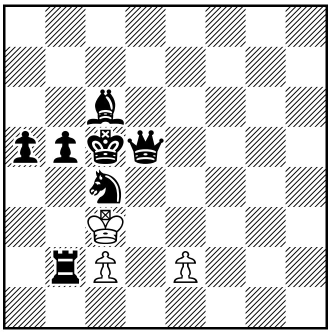


≠3

1.♕f6! (>2.♙×f4! [zz])
1...♟×g3 2.♖3h4+ ♚f3 3.♕c3≠;
2...♟×h4 3.♕×f5≠;
1...♟f3 2.♖5h4+ ♟×h4 3.♕×h4≠;
1...♚f3 2.♕×f5 (>3.♙×f4, ♙g4)
2...♚e3,♟g4 3.♕d3≠;
1...♝~ 2.♕×g5+ ♚f3 3.♕×f4≠.

Not easy to solve with a lot of complicated play {W}. Strangely, this is a delayed waiter because the 'threat' (not the key) is a waiting move: if there is no Black first move, then 2.♙×f4 ♚×f4 3.♕d4≠ or 2...♟×f4 3.♕×f5,♕h4,♖5h4≠; but there is no ≠3 if Black does not move at all! {S}. The variation beginning 1...♟×g3 was the rock I perished on, and I needed my computer to tell all. [This problemist's] **36** got me too: Makaronez macaronis Meadley. Simple-looking but deep {M}.

61. Ivan Bryukhanov (Ukraine): Original

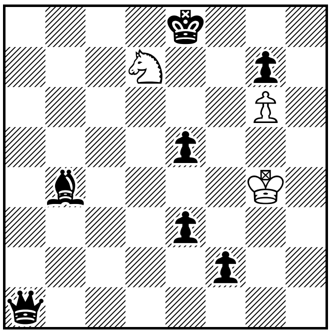


Ser-S≠16

1.♙e4 2.♙e5 3.♙e6 4.♙e7 5.♙e8♘ 6.♘d6 7.♘×c4 8.♔×b2 9.♔a3 10.♘b2 11.♙c4 12.♙×b5 13.♙b6 14.♙b7 15.♙b8♕ 16.♕b4+, ♟×b4≠.

A double *excelsior* (i.e. two ♙-marches from the 2nd to the 8th ranks) ending in an *ideal mate* of the ♔ {ed.}. Prefiguring [the mate] is the hard part. 5.♙e8♗ is a nice try {M}. It is fairly obvious that the first moves must be for the e♙ to promote {W}.

62. Arthur Willmott (Australia): Original



Ser-≠10, CIRCE

1.♘c5 2.♘b3 3.♘×a1(♛d8) 4.♘c2 5.♘×b4(♞f8) 6.♘d3 7.♘×f2(♟f7) 8.♘d3 9.♘×e5(♟e7) 10.♙×f7≠.

A simple demonstration of Circean rebirths, to blockade the ♚; it's a pity, though, that the mate is not Circe-specific {ed.}. Mow 'em down in order of rank! What does ♟e3 do? {M}. (♟e3 prevents the ♔ from capturing ♟f2; ♟g7 prevents promotion of the ♙; and ♔g4 stops 9.♘×e5 via 8.♘g4 {ed.}.) I don't believe in fairies, but ... no cooks this time! {S}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, November/December 2005

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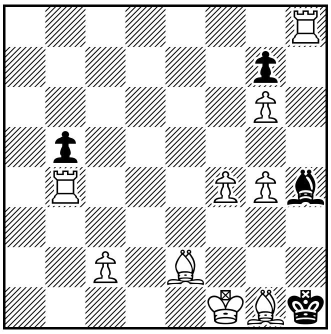
Seeing that it's the Festive Season, this time we'll include only 'unorthodox' compositions in our BILLABONG – this being an old tradition for problem columns from newspapers and periodicals such as the *British Chess Magazine*, whose December issues from the 1960s (and much earlier) featured just 'Fairy'-chess creations. In **63**, White begins and *compels* Black to mate White on his 7th move: this is achieved through some clever, attractive manoeuvring. (Who can name **63**'s theme?) For the two helpmates, however, Black starts; instead, the play is cooperative (rather than combative or coercive), and Black is checkmated after 3 moves. **64** has 2 solutions from the diagram position, whereas **65** is a *twin*: solve it as given, then set it up again with the ♛f8 now on b5, and a different solution ensues. Arthur Willmott's 'custodial' series-mover **66** is a *series-helpstalemate in 13*: Black makes 13 uninterrupted moves so that White can deliver stalemate in 1 at the sequence's end. I do hope that you all have a very happy Christmas and New Year pondering over this quartet!

CORRECTION. The stipulation above **62**'s diagram within our last PROBLEM BILLABONG should have been *Series-mate*, and not Series-selfmate. Since none of our solvers were led astray, there seems no need to postpone **62**'s solution. Sincere apologies to all concerned – particularly this problem's composer, Arthur Willmott.

63. **Leonid Makaronez** (Israel): Original

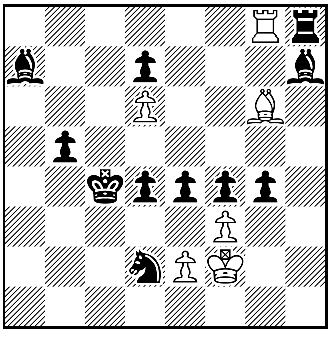


S≠7

1.♗c4! ♟×c4 2.♖b6 ♟c3
3.♖f6 ♟×f6 4.♙g7 ♟f5
5.♙g8♗ ♟×g4 6.♗c4 ♟g3
7.♗e2 ♟g2≠.

The *Phoenix theme* – i.e. a captured piece is replaced by a promotee of the same type and colour – and the latter even 'returns' to the now-absent ♗'s original square, e2, for good measure: cute {ed.}. It was easy to work out that the g♟ can mate on g2 if a ♗ self-blocks on e2. The hard part was to see that you can give away that ♗ and then replace it by promoting the ♙g6 and getting the new ♗ to e2 just in time. Not for the faint-hearted! {Andy Sag [S]}. Ali Baba theme: new lamps for old; new ♗ for old? {Bob Meadley [M]}. White's first move must release a Black piece, then some clever play including an underpromotion to ♗ {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

64. **Christopher J. A. Jones** (England): Original

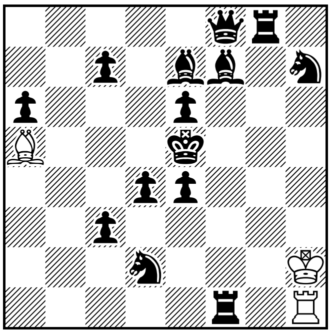


H≠3, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♟b4** ♖**b8 2.♟b3** ♖**×b3 3.♝c5** ♗**f7≠**;
(b) **1.♟g×f3** ♗**h5 2.♟×e2** ♖**c8+ 3.♚d3** ♗**×e2≠**.

Unusually, CJAJ's composition attracted some adverse criticism from our stalwarts! {ed.}. One wonders if it is possible to reduce the amount of material on the board and prevent cooks by clever construction rather than extra men {S}. A rather crowded setting. Two solutions can be obtained with a lot less force! I have been playing around with this problem and have come up with **64v**: **Christopher J. A. Jones** (version by Arthur Willmott): {♔f2, ♖g8, ♗g6, ♙e3; ♚c4, ♝a7, ♟b5,d4,d5,e4} H≠3, 2 solutions (C+). (a) **1.♝c5 ♗e8 2.♝b4 ♖g6 3.♚c5 ♖c6≠**; (b) **1.♟d3 ♗h5 2.♟d2 ♖c8+ 3.♚d3 ♗e2≠**. {W}. It will be interesting to learn which version Chris Jones prefers, and why {ed.}. [**64v** was rejected by Mr Jones, on thematic grounds.]

65. **Henryk Grudziński** (Poland): Original

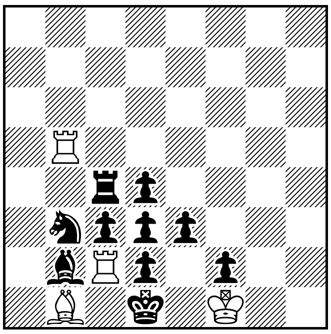


H≠3; (b) ♛f8→b5

(a) **1.♜f4! ♖a1! 2.♝f6 ♗×c7+ 3.♛d6 ♖a5≠**;
(b) **1.♜f5! ♖b1! 2.♛d5 ♖b5 3.♝f6 ♗×c7≠**.

A fine *ODT* (orthogonal-diagonal transformation) and *funktionwechsel* (exchange of function) between the White pieces, each solution ending in a *pin-mate* {ed.}. A good matched twin. ♗ and ♖ take turns in pinning the ♛, allowing the other piece to mate after the necessary self-blocks are deployed. {S}. ♞h7 takes no part in the first solution; ♟a6 and ♝f7 take no part in the second {W}. Probably the best helpmate 3er in the BILLABONG. Grudziński for PM [Prime Minister]! ... Regarding **64** and **65**, what a contrast in styles! **65** to me doesn't look economical (it may well be), but produced a fantastic double. It looks impossible to mate Black ... One deeply analytical issue could be to give reasons as to why so many men are needed... {M}.

66. **Arthur Willmott** (Australia): Original



Ser-H=13

1.♜a4 2.♜a1 3.♜×b1 4.♜c1 5.♜×c2 6.♚c1 7.♟d1♝ 8.♜e2 9.♟c2 10.♝c3 11.♝e1 12.♟d2 13.♟d3, ♖×b3=.

Lovely *incarceration* by Black. Geoff Foster passes on an insightful comment, that such a problem might well be better set – having undergone appropriate constructional changes – as a *series-autostalemate in 13* (i.e. White plays a sequence of 13 moves ending in stalemate to himself), since White's only move here contributes nothing thematically {ed.}. What a tough problem! Myriads of 14-move solutions, the most attractive being 1.♟×c2 2.♟×b1♜, but to block 'em and lock 'em in 13 took me a day. Congratulations to AW. One query: what does ♞b3 do? {M}. A compact setting with precise manoeuvring. Not hard to solve once you see that there is no place for the ♞b3, so the ♖ must end up capturing it and that only a ♜ will work on e2. A nice try which starts 1.♟×c2 2.♟×b1♜ creates a decoy with ♜s on both d2 and e2 in the finale, but takes just one too many moves {S}.

Without doubt the hardest set of problems in the BILLABONG to date. The awesome foursome! After quite a few hours, all has been revealed... {M}.

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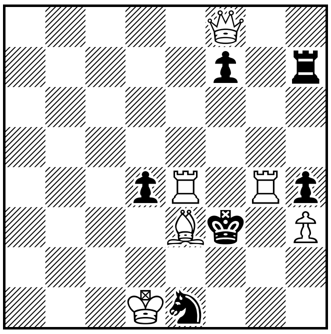
Welcome to the 2006 BILLABONG! I have decided henceforth to drop the tag 'Original' above each diagram: readers can assume that each composition is receiving its first publication here, unless stated otherwise. Hearty greetings to Steven Dowd of Birmingham, Alabama – a relative newcomer to the problem art whose 6er **69** has an Australian connection, being dedicated to the memory of C. J. S. Purdy. Steven writes: "You may want to save this for Mr Purdy's 100th birthday – 2006! It is based on the game Cecil Purdy – Frank Crowl, Australia 1945. Modified to a problem, using problem themes, [**69**] perhaps shows not so great a distance between the game and the problem world!". The other originals are all fairly straightforward and orthodox. The simple idea behind Niharendu Sikdar's **70**, a *helpmate in 7* – i.e. Black begins, the play being conspiratorial such that White mates on his 7th move – has been shown much more economically (even in miniature) before, but this setting has its fine points. Enjoy yourselves, solvers!

CONGRATULATIONS to **Peter Wong**, who has just been made Australia's first ever FIDE Master for Chess Composition! With the imminent publication of the latest FIDE Album (1998–2000), Peter has now reached 14 points. (The minimum of 12 points for an FM was previously attained, I suspect, by Bill Whyatt – but some years before the FM title for Chess Composition was established in the mid-1970s.)

67. Ian Shanahan (Australia)



≠2 [set play, 2 tries]

1...♟×e3 2.♖ef4≠;
1.♖e5?[A] (>2.♕a8[E])
1...♜h8 2.♕×f7≠;
1...♟f6 2.♕×f6≠;
1...♟f5 2.♕×f5≠;
1...♟×e3 2.♖f5≠;
1...♜h6![a]
1.♖e6?[B] (>2.♕a8[E])
1...♟×e3 2.♖f6≠;
1...♜h5![b]

1.♕a8![E] (>2.<u>♖e5</u>[A], <u>♖e6</u>[B], <u>♖e7</u>[C], <u>♖e8</u>[D])
1...♜h6[a] 2.<u>♖e6</u>[B]≠;
1...♜h5[b] 2.<u>♖e5</u>[A]≠;
1...♟f~ 2.<u>♖e7</u>[C]≠;
1...♜h8 2.<u>♖e8</u>[D]≠;
1...♟×e3 2.♖ef4≠.

My 12-man *Meredith* 2er **67** focusses upon *pattern play*:

(i) the *Banny theme*, exhibiting the 'algebra' {Tries: 1.A?/B? 1...a!/b! 1.Key! 1...a/b 2.B/A≠} through the commonplace mechanism of *battery-formation* and *-play*, yet here embellished by *changed mates* after moves such as 1...♜h8 (this very same idea – but on a much grander scale – is seen in Geoff Foster's gigantic **23**);

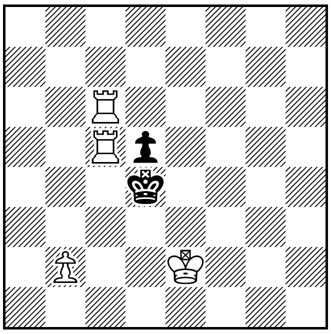
(ii) the *partial Fleck theme*, wherein the 4 post-key threats (underlined) are separated into individual mates by specific Black defences – less careful ones of which, alas, lead to *multiple mates* (hence the Fleck effect is just "partial" instead of *total*); and

(iii) *try/key + threat sequence-reversal* – i.e. ♕a8[E] serves as both key and post-try threat within the formal pattern {Tries: 1.A?/B? (>2.E) Key: 1.E! (>2.A, B, ...)}, while the two tries become post-key threats.

♞e1 merely stops *cooks* like 1.♕d6 {ed.}.

Multiple threats are usually bad news. Although separated by vertical moves of the ♜ and ♟f7 and *eliminated* by 1...♟×e3, they all remain in place after moves like 1...♟d3 or 1...♞~ {Andy Sag [S]}. [But such moves do not defeat *any* of the threats, and so are irrelevant {ed}.] 'If you want to mate, move the ♕ to a8!'. Pardon my doggerel… {Bob Meadley [M]}. Excellent separation of mates. Well done {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

68. Vladimir Kozhakin (Russia)

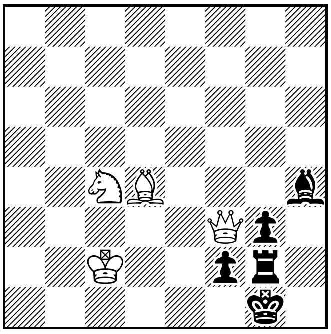


≠4 [1 try]

1.♙b4? 1...♚e4!
1.♔f3!
1...♚d3 2.♖×d5≠;
1...♚e5 2.♙b4 ♚d4 3.♖d6 ♚d3 4.♖d×d5≠;
3...♚e5 4.♖c×d5≠;
2…♚f5 3.♖×d5≠.

A pretty miniature with some hidden symmetries {ed.}. An economical and tricky shepherding manoeuvre {S}. Give-and-take key {W}. Nice ♖-play {M}.

69. Stephen B. Dowd (U.S.A.)
~ Dedicated to Cecil Purdy (b.1906) ~

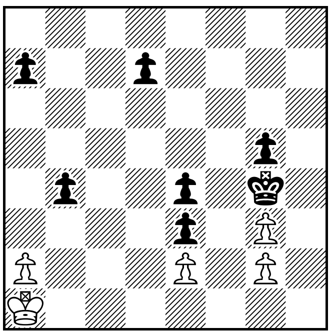


≠6

1.♘e3!, the main variation being:
1...♟f1♛+ 2.♘×g2+ ♛f2+
3.♗×f2+ ♟×f2 4.♘e3 ♟f1♛
5.♕×f1+ ♚h2 6.♕g2≠.

There are several (sub)variations, but the chief idea seems to reside in the give-and-take key (which unpins the ♟ while preventing the ♚'s flight to f1); other motifs include repeated promotions, the *switchback* by the ♘ (i.e. 4.♘e3), battery-play, and a sideboard *model mate* {ed.}. The unpinning key allows Black to promote with discovered check {S}. An aggressive key, taking a flight-square {W}. The computer helped here. Purdy always said that game endings are harder than most problems. He was right with this one. … The [above] variation is where I came unstuck as I missed 4.♘e3. Looks easy when you see it… {M}.

70. Niharendu Sikdar (India)



H≠7

1.♟d5 ♙a3 2.♟d4 ♙×b4 3.♟d3 ♙b5
4.♟×e2 ♙b6 5.♟e1♝! ♙×a7
6.♟e2 ♙a8♕ 7.♟e3 ♕f3≠.

The *excelsior theme* doubled (i.e. ♙♟s march from their game-array squares all the way on to promotion), Black's motivation for his passive promotion to ♝ being especially fine. Some critics might say 'old hat', or 'too much wood' – but, in my opinion, the subtle underlying strategy justifies this setting's right to exist {ed.}.

Very pretty, and I was nearly ready to chuck the f$@%ing board against the wall! ...

An Indian fellow named Sikdar
Makes his solvers jump o'er a high bar;
For he uses the pawns
On his neat chequered lawns
To deliver checkmate from afar. {M}.

All men contribute somehow – even the ♔, who dictates that only an underpromotion to ♝ will work {S}. A fairly straightforward series of ♙♟-moves {W}.

[NB: There were no **PROBLEM BILLABONG**s in *Australian Chess* Vol.4 Nos.2–6, March–December 2006.]

PROBLEM BILLABONG, January/February 2007

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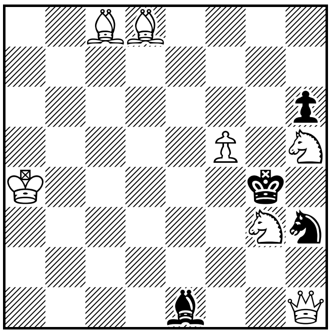
Well, the BILLABONG's drought over the past several months has at long last broken! (Sincere apologies for my lengthy indisposition…) The composers represented this time are some of our 'usual suspects': besides the regular introductory *twomover*, there are two *helpmates in 3* – i.e. Black begins, and cooperative play results in the ♚ being checkmated on White's 3rd move – as well as a *series-helpstalemate in 10* (here, Black makes 10 consecutive moves to reach a position where White is then able to stalemate Black in 1). Note that **72** has 2 distinct solutions (question: which lizard[!] does this problem evoke, theme-hunters?), and that in part (b) of **73** the ♖h1 is replaced by a ♘. Have fun, solvers!

CONGRATULATIONS to **Geoff Foster**, who [in 2006] snagged the latest **Brian Harley Award** (2001–2002), for twomovers, with **23** (see the January/February 2004 PROBLEM BILLABONG). Bestowed upon the top problem of a given type published within Great Britain by a Commonwealth composer, this is the first time in over 30 years that an Australian has received this prestigious prize! Geoff will also be running a chess-problem solving tourney on 23 January 2007 during the Australian Junior Chess Championship in Canberra. Many thanks in this regard are also due to **Dr Nigel Nettheim**, who has written a marvellous introduction to chess problems – plus some insights into solving them – linked to this website: < http://www.actjcl.org.au/ausjuniors2007/section_puzzle.php >.

71. David Shire (England)



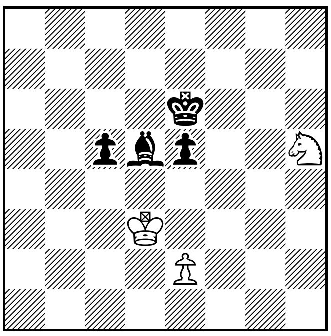
≠2 [2 tries]

1.♙f6+?
1...♚h4 2.♙f7≠;
1...♚g5!
1.♗b7? (>2.♕f3, ♗f3)
1...♞g1 2.♕h4≠;
1...♞g5!

1.♘e4! (zz)
1...♞~ 2.♙f6≠;
1...♞f4 2.♘hf6≠;
1...♞g5 2.♘ef6≠;
1...♝~ 2.♕d1≠;
1...♚×h5 2.♕f3≠.

Although there is no definite theme here, there are unifying factors nevertheless: the tries' refutations are both on the same square (g5), and so are the three post-key mates (on f6) after moves by the ♞. The two tries also focus one's attention upon the ♗-lines; and isn't the *pin-mate* 2.♙f7≠ sweet? {ed.}. I had a lot of difficulty getting **71** and **73** – and **72** for that matter. A brilliant key to this Meredith {Bob Meadley [M]}.

72. Bernd Gräfrath (Germany)

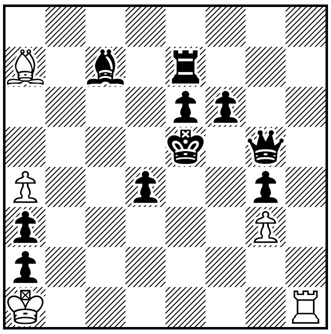


H≠3, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♝c4+** ♔**d2 2.♚d5** ♘**f6+ 3.♚d4** ♙**e3**≠;
(b) **1.♚f5** ♙**e3 2.♟c4+** ♔**e2 3.♚e4** ♘**g3**≠.

Pretty *chameleon-echo model mates* (i.e. particularly economical mates, on different-coloured squares) – the chameleon is the proverbial lizard here! {ed.}. Again very difficult for me, and such a simple position – true art! Which lizard you ask? Gotta be a goanna in a billabong! {M}.

73. Christopher J. A. Jones (England)

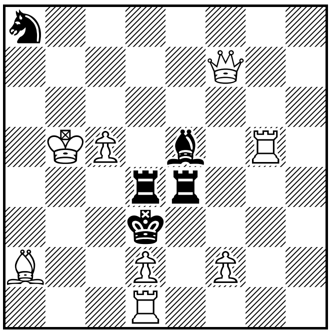


H≠3; (b) ♘h1

(a) **1.♚d6 ♖h5 2.♛b5 ♙×b5 3.♜d7 ♗c5≠**;
(b) **1.♚f5 ♗b8 2.♝f4 ♙×f4 3.♛g6 ♘g3≠**.

Typical Chris Jones *orthogonal-diagonal transformative* trickery! But there is a constructional infelicity: one ♙ remains idle in each phase {ed.}. I went back to **29** for help. Chris likes moving ♙s. Could the ♛ be a ♜? {M}. The answer is NO, Bob: ♜g5 leads to dozens of cooks in (a) {ed.}.

74. Arthur Willmott (Australia)



Ser-H=10

1.♞b6 2.♞c4 3.♞×d2 4.♜c4 5.♝d4
6.♜e6 7.♚e4 8.♞f3 9.♞e5 10.♚d5, ♙f3=.

All Black pieces need to be *pinned* in order to effect a stalemate. The White line-pieces' focus upon d5 – as well as the ♔b5 and ♙c5 – unavoidably signals that the ♚ will ultimately find rest on d5 {ed.}. I tried to cook Arthur's **74** but I believe it to be sound. Traffic jam in the centre: nice {M}.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, March/April 2007

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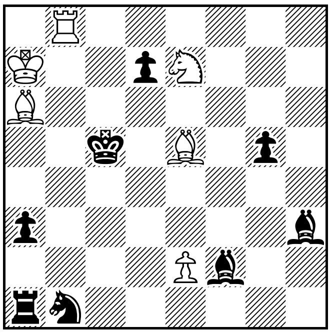
Welcome back to our two Israeli friends with their tricky(?) 6er, **75**, and also to Henryk – whose two-part *helpmate in 2*, **76**, requires collaboration between Black and White (with Black moving first), and then a repositioning of the ♚a4 to d6 for a different move-sequence. Arthur's rather unusual **77** is a single-solution *helpmate in 4* wherein solvers need to establish the identity of the five (orthodox) chess-men represented in **77**'s diagram by Black and White draughtsmen (⛂⛀): a vital constraint is that **77**'s solution *must be unique* – i.e. the problem has to be *sound*. To start you off in your solving process: immediately one can infer that ⛂f5 is *not* the ♚, and so one of the other ⛂s must be! In my own retroanalytic 'twin' composition **78** – it belongs to a rarely seen sub-class of the "Last Move?" genre – I pose the simple question: "Is the position checkmate?"; when you have settled upon an answer, replace the ♟h2 with a ♛ and then think about it again... Knock yourselves out with these brain-busters!

By all accounts, the inaugural **AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR CHESS-PROBLEM-SOLVING CHAMPIONSHIP** held in Canberra during January 2007 was a huge success. Initiated and coordinated by **Dr Nigel Nettheim**, who also co-ran the event with **Geoff Foster**, it attracted numerous eager young hopefuls. Besides that introduction to chess problems mentioned last time, Nigel has appended the answer sheet and a report (including statistics and proposals for the future) to the website: < http://www.actjcl.org.au/ausjuniors2007/section_puzzle.php >, which regrettably embraces the misleading word "puzzle" in its URL. So, a jeremiad: I do wish that people would cease using "puzzle" as an alternative to "chess problem" and/or "endgame study": the term "problem" has been firmly established throughout the world for over 150 years; calling such chess compositions "puzzles" is blatant ignorance.

75. Leonid Makaronez & Leonid Ljubashevskij (Israel)

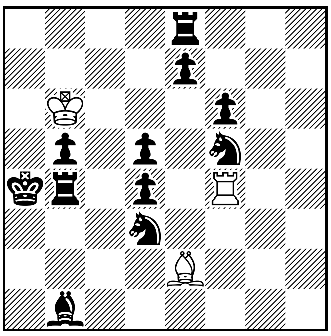


≠6 [1 try]

1.♗d3? (>2.♖b5≠) 1...♞c3!
1.♖b5+!
1...♚c4+ 2.♖b6+ ♚c5 3.♙e3 (>4.♗d4≠) 3...♝×e3
4.♗e2 ♞c3 5.♗d6+ ♚d4 6.♖b4≠.

A clever single-liner, strategically rather like a helpmate! {ed.}. Tricky one-liner. The key allows a discovered diagonal check, White retaliating with a similar manoeuvre [i.e., a *cross-check*] and then forcing the ♚ to move along the original checking diagonal to leave the ♖ unpinned! {Andy Sag [S]}. Too good for me ... That's twice the Leonids have done me in – curses, but well done {Bob Meadley [M]}. A brutal checking key-move followed by some nice play {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

76. Henryk Grudziński (Poland)



H≠2; (b) ♚a4→d6

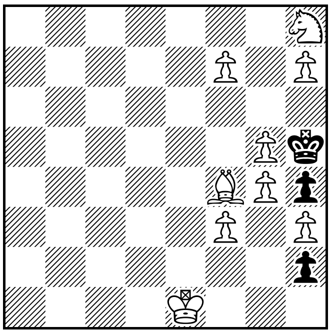
(a) **1.♜b2 ♖f3 2.♞b4 ♗×b5≠**;
(b) **1.♟e5 ♗g4 2.♞e7 ♖×f6≠**.

In each half, Black's play illustrates the *follow-my-leader* idea: a Black unit moves to the square previously vacated by Black {ed.}. Black piece substitution does the trick {S}. I was a little disappointed with **76**: a forest of men with two fairly simple solutions. Of course, I do understand how difficult it might have been to get sound... {M}.

77. **Arthur Willmott** (Australia)

{♔g5, ○h4,h6; ●b6,d3,f5} H≠4: Deduce the men! **No Solution!** Geoff Foster, who analysed all of **77**'s positional possibilities using the computer program Popeye, summarizes the situation nicely: "Arthur Willmott's H≠4 caught my eye, but it looked much too difficult to solve, so I've used my trusty computer instead. I [wrote my own program] to create a Popeye input file of all the 600 possible positions. I ran Popeye using this input file and the solutions of the 600 problems are [given]. I specified a maximum of 5 solutions, and for each problem Popeye found either 5 or zero solutions. In other words, I don't think the problem is sound using the stated convention". A tantalizing problem idea from Arthur nevertheless {ed.}.

78. **Ian Shanahan** (Australia)



Checkmate? (b) ♛h2

(a) **No!** The last move – by White, obviously, since Black is in check – must have been either ♙g3-g4+ or ♙g2-g4+. If it were ♙g3-g4+, then Black's last move did not involve either ♟, but might possibly have been made by the ♚. So was it ♚g4-h5? No: ♚g4 would be in an impossible (*irreal*) double-check from both ♙f3 and ♙h3. Perhaps it was ♚h6-h5 (preceded necessarily by ♙g4-g5+)? No: before ♙g4-g5+, ♚h6 would already have been in check from ♗f4 with White to play – illegal! How about ♚g6-h5 (prior to which White definitely played ♙g7×●g8♘+)? No: such a ♙-configuration and -play requires a minimum of 15 captures, while Black still has 3 units present – unattainable! All possible previous ♚-moves are now exhausted, hence the ♚ – and therefore Black – had no last move at all: Black is in *retrostalemate*! Thus White's last move could only have been ♙g2-g4+ (following ♟g3×○h2); consequently Black can – indeed, *must* – reply with ♟×g4 *e.p.*

(b) **Yes!** If the last move was ♙g2-g4+, then Black is in retrostalemate: ♚h5 and ♟h4 cannot have just moved (for the same reasons as given above); nor could the ♛, since she must have arrived at h2 from one of only three squares – g1, g3 or h1 – from all of which White was in check illegally with Black to play. So White's last move was certainly ♙g3-g4≠ (before which Black played, say, ♛a2-h2) and Black now cannot capture *e.p.* to relieve the checkmate.

A paradox: Black is checkmated with ♛h2, but not with ♟h2! Note that ♙f7, ♙h7 and ♘h8 can be replaced by ♙a2 and ♗b1 – saving a ♙, but losing good retroanalytic content {ed.}. Lovely: a nice simple position leads to some good retro-play {M}.

[NB: There was no **PROBLEM BILLABONG** in *Australian Chess* Vol.5 No.3, May/June 2007.]

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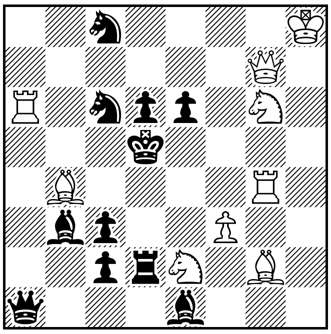
It's a relatively orthodox feast at the BILLABONG with this selection – directmates and helpmates only! But first, a joyous welcome to newcomer Martin Moskowitz, a helpmate specialist who hails from Florida. There cannot be very many active nonagenarian problemists, but Martin is certainly one of them; long may he continue to compose so interestingly. In his **82**, a *helpmate in 3* (i.e. Black begins and White mates on his 3rd move, both sides collaborating to bring about the ♚'s demise), there are two solutions in the diagrammed position; when one moves the ♗ to g2, there are two more! Niharendu's **80** is distinctly 19th-century in style: what attribute(s) about it might suggest such atavism? We encounter David Shire this time in divergent composing modes: his 2er, **79**, is rather complex and very modern (you'd better be on your toes with this one!), whereas his helpmate in 2, **81**, is a paragon of simplicity, thrift, and absolute elegance. Enjoy yourselves, solvers!

79. David Shire (England)



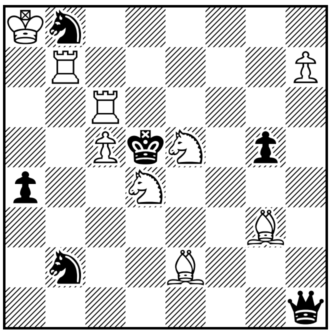
≠2 [1 try]

1.♕c7? (>2.♕×c6)
1...♞6~ 2.♙f4≠;
1...♞d4!? 2.♘ef4≠;
1...♞e5!? 2.♘gf4≠;
1...♞8~ 2.♕×d6≠;
1...♟e5 2.♕f7≠;
1...♛a4,♛×a6 2.♘×c3≠;
1...♝a4!

1.♕×c3! (>2.♙f4[A], ♘ef4[B], ♘gf4[C])
1...♝g3 2.♙f4[A]≠;
1...♞d4 2.♘ef4[B]≠;
1...♜×e2 2.♘gf4[C]≠;
1...♜d4 2.♕×c6≠;
1...♟e5 2.♕×b3≠;
1...♛×c3+ 2.♘×c3≠.

Despite the key's triple threat, the try does appear stronger – as it should be! Unity is enhanced by the fact that all post-key threats are on f4. (Also, the pattern of underlined and 'underdotted' moves here reveal the *Odessa theme*, which David has shown us a number of times before.) Post-try, there is *Black correction*; and after the key, the *partial Fleck theme*. About **79**, David writes: "This is a reject from the current WCCT. I have reversed try and key so that **79** is no longer thematic (and therefore OK to use). I always wanted this because we can now arrange the separation of the 3 threats. Before, 1.♕c7! had to be the key, so 1.♕×c3? was defeated by 1...♝g3! with ♗g2 on h1." {ed.}. The sacrificial self-pinning key creates a multiple threat but allows a check. Other defences unpin the ♕ {Andy Sag [S]}. White's key pins the ♕ but activates the ♘s {Bob Meadley [M]}. A ♕-sacrifice key-move; nice play {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

80. Niharendu Sikdar (India)

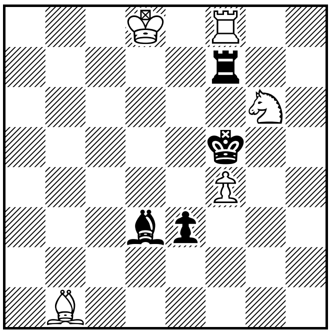


≠3

1.♖d6+!
1...♚×c5 2.♘d7+ ♞×d7 3.♘e6≠;
1...♚e4 2.♖e7! (>3.♘e~) 2...♚e3+ 3.♘ef3≠;
2...♛h3 3.♘g4≠;
2...♛h6 3.♘g6≠;
2...♛×h7 3.♘f7≠;
2...♞d7 3.♘×d7≠;
2...♞c6 3.♘e×c6≠;
2...♞c4 3.♘×c4≠;
2...♞d3 3.♘×d3≠.

An antique 19th-century ambience is evoked in **80** by its checking key and complete ♘-*tour* {ed.}. A checking give-and-take key. The set flight remains, leading to a ♖-battery with octuple threat [after 2.♖e7] separated by 8 defences including a check taking the e♘ full circle {S}. “Never miss a check – it might be mate”. Clever key, and after 1...♚e4 it is not easy to see the finale {M}.

81. David Shire (England)

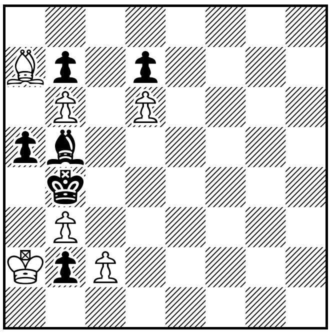


H≠2, 2 solutions

(a) **1.♚f6 ♖g8 2.♝×g6 ♖×g6≠**;
(b) **1.♚e4 ♗a2 2.♜×f4 ♖×f4≠**.

A perfect *orthogonal-diagonal transformation*. However, I might be inclined to replace the ♟ with a ♞ thence rotate the position 90° clockwise (C+) so that *both* solutions then terminate in a *model mate*! In June 2008, I contacted David about this possibility, but he opted to stick with his original version as diagrammed – on the entirely reasonable grounds that for him, the economy of *Black* force was a higher priority here {ed.}. Hard to top your description – “a paragon of simplicity, thrift, and absolute elegance”. Lovely! {M}. An excellent problem with two well-matched solutions {W}. Very neat! The two solutions are complementary but perhaps shifting ♗b1 to c2 would make them even more so? {S}.

82. Martin Moskowitz (U.S.A.)



H≠3, 2 solutions; (b) ♗a7→g2

(a)(i) **1.♟b1♜ ♗b8 2.♜d1 ♔b2 3.♜×d6 ♗×d6≠**;
(ii) **1.♟a4 ♙c4 2.♚a5 ♔a3 3.♝a6 ♙b4≠**;
(b)(i) **1.♟b1♜ ♗d5 2.♜×b3 ♙c3+ 3.♚a4 ♗×b3≠**;
(ii) **1.♝c4 ♗f1 2.♚b5 ♙×c4+ 3.♚a6 ♙c5≠**.

The repetition of 1.♟b1♜ between (a) and (b) many helpmate connoisseurs would regard as a serious flaw, but there is ample variety here and more than sufficient intrigue to carry it {ed.}. This one took me a long time to find all four solutions {W}. What a good composer! Simplicity and maximum annoyance for solvers! I’d like to see more of him (I think...) {M}. The twins are harmonious: in each half, the ♟b2 promotes to a ♜ in one solution and is inactive in the other {S}.

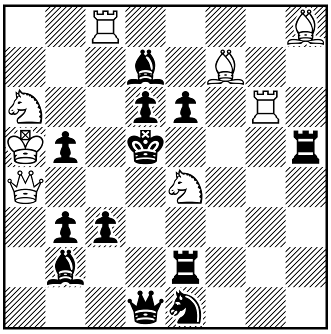
On this PROBLEM BILLABONG quartet, Bob Meadley writes: “4 good problems and I had plenty of trouble with the nonagenarian. Even sitting on the dunny didn’t help!”.

PROBLEM BILLABONG, September/October 2007

Editor: **Dr Ian Shanahan**, 57 Yates Avenue, Dundas Valley NSW 2117, AUSTRALIA; tel. (02)9871-4282.
e-mail: ian_shanahan@hotmail.com

The doyen of Australian retrograde-analysis composers, Dennis Hale, has come out of his 25-year retirement in offering our BILLABONG **86**, to which he affixes the motto "Lucky Last" (let us hope that Dennis does not *really* intend this problem to be his 'final curtain'). Anyway, the stipulation for **86** is: ***"White to move. Add three Pawns of either colour on vacant squares (other than those from the 1st or 8th ranks) such that the position becomes illegal. How many solutions are there?"***. Beware of any overlooked scenarios or 'double-counting'! In Henryk's **85**, which is a *helpmate in 2* (i.e. Black begins and White mates on his 2nd move, with both sides working cooperatively), there is a different solution when the Black men on d5 and e4 exchange places. Concerning the two original direct-mates, **83** and **84**, I shall say only that they are quite typical of their eminent creators... Have fun, solvers!

83. **David Shire** (England)

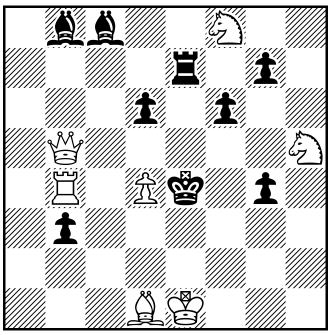


≠2 [set play]

1...♝e8 2.♗×e6≠;
1.♖g4! (>2.♘b4)
1...♝×c8 2.♕×b5≠; ❶
1...♜×h8 2.♖g5≠; ❶
1...♝c6 2.♘c7≠; ❷
1...♜e5 2.♘f6≠; ❷
1...♞c2 2.♕×b3≠; ❸
1...♞d3 2.♕d4≠; ❸
1...♝a3 2.♘×c3≠;
1...♜×e4 2.♕×e4≠;
1...♛d4 2.♕×e4≠.

The first six variations constitute, pairwise, strategic cognates (i.e. ❶ = capture + unguard; ❷ = self-block + White interference; ❸ = Black interference) – the thematic 'carapace' for the previous WCCT's 2er section {ed.}. The key relinquishes the set-play but adds a threat and three new mates to make nine defensive variations in all {Andy Sag [S]}. Good defences save the day! A classy 2er {Bob Meadley [M]}. A classic problem {Arthur Willmott [W]}.

84. **Leonid Makaronez** (Israel)

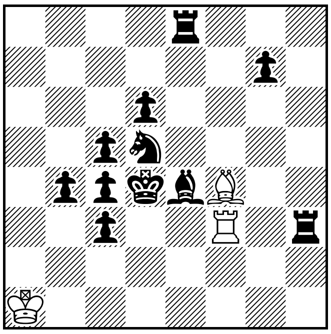


≠3 [set play]

1...♚e3 2.♕e2≠;
1.♔f2! (>2.♘g3+ ♚f4 3.♘g6)
1...♝f5 2.♘g3+ ♚f4 3.♕×f5≠;
1...♟f5 2.♙d5+ ♚e5 3.♘g6≠;
1...♜e5 2.♙×e5+ ♚f5 3.♙×d6≠;
1...♟d5 2.♕e2+ ♚f5 3.♕×g4≠.

A fine surprise key and a very mobile ♚ indeed! {ed.}. The key takes the set flight but allows a (non-defensive) check. Fortunately for the composer, the ♟g4 has another purpose – to prevent 2.♗f3≠ {S}. A very unexpected key-move {W}. Meadley solves Makaronez – now that's a switch! {M}.

85. Henryk Grudziński (Poland)

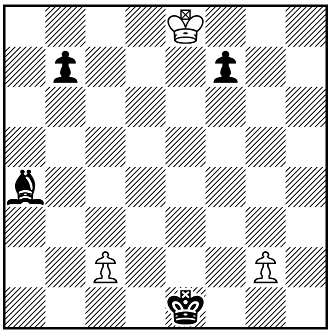


H≠2; (b) ♞d5↔♝e4

(a) **1.♞e7 ♗h6 2.♟d5 ♗×g7≠**;
(b) **1.♞g3 ♖f1 2.♜e4 ♖d1≠**.

Not-quite-perfect correspondence between the two phases, but quite well done nevertheless, and with slightly unusual twinning {ed.}. A wonderful ♝/♞ square-swap and (b) was tough for me {M}. I wondered why so many Black pieces, but they all seem to serve a purpose {W}. Another harmonious twin. In each case, the ♞ interferes with a ♜ and the mating piece moves twice {S}.

86. Dennis Hale (Australia)



White to move. Add three Pawns of either colour on vacant squares (other than those from the 1st or 8th ranks) such that the position becomes illegal. How many solutions are there?

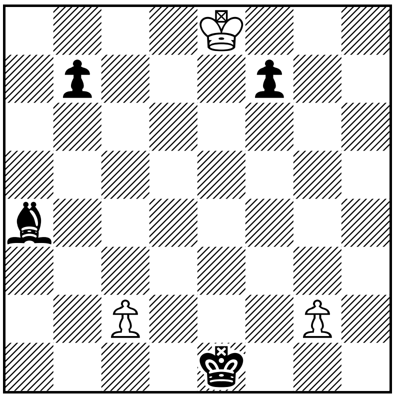
There are **5398** solutions according to the composer – i.e. 5398 different illegal configurations that can be created by adding ♙♙♙, ♙♙♟, ♙♟♟, or ♟♟♟ to the problem position. In short, the numerical breakdown for these four cases is, respectively: 832, 2076, 1862, and 628 illegal situations – their sum being 5398.

(Dennis shall provide a detailed account of the various illegality scenarios within these four categories in the near future, which I'll then pass on to all interested parties. [See below.]) But apart from Andy Sag, none of our solvers' tallies came anywhere close to 5398. Andy, however, claims 6285 solutions – so either he has overshot the mark by 'double-counting' 887 scenarios; or instead, the composer has failed altogether to consider them! Anyhow, this sort of enumerative chess problem is by no means everybody's 'cup of tea' (indeed, one of our stalwarts, despite seriously attempting it, dismissed **86** entirely!); yet certain long-established problem magazines – such as *Die Schwalbe*, *feenschach*, and *Mat Plus* – do embrace mathematical chess problems, the first two periodicals having done so for several decades {ed.}. Hale is hearty...! {M}.

[In *Australasian Chess* Vol.6 No.2, March/April 2008, p.45, Geoff Foster writes: "Dennis Hale reports that his intended solution is correct. Andy Sag's solution confirms Dennis's solution in all those aspects with which it deals, but Andy completely overlooked the possibility of a pawn move discovering check from the bishop, which accounts for the difference." The full solution to **86** follows:]

Dennis Hale: **Australian Chess**, September–October 2007 {No.86}

"Lucky Last"



White to move. Add three Pawns of either colour on vacant squares (other than those from the 1st or 8th ranks) such that the position becomes illegal. How many solutions are there?

For me, the question "Could this position have occurred in a legally played game of chess?" has always been the quintessence of retroanalysis. To determine whether a particular position is legal entails retroanalytical thinking, however elementary. What *Lucky Last* lacks in depth is, I hope, made up for in part by its breadth. For anyone unused to retrograde analysis, working through this problem would be a useful introduction; it is also a good exercise in organisation of thought. My favourite Chess maxim is "Chess makes fools of us all", and therefore quickly add that it is perfectly possible that my solution may be defective in some way. I hope not, but whoever attempts to sculpt with quicksilver must accept the possibility of failure. After a break of 25 years I'm finding this type of thinking to be quite tiring, so much so that the title "Lucky Last" will prove apt. Regards and thanks for publishing what I rather regret will probably be my last problem – Dennis Hale.

FULL SOLUTION

Please note that within this solution, the total of *new* (unduplicated) illegal positions is shown for each (sub)category. Duplications are eliminated by reference to preceding subcategories; thus a different order of subcategories would result in different numbers for certain subcategories. *Initially*, it should be noted that there cannot be any duplications between the four major categories of (A), (B), (C), and (D) below, since a different colour-combination of Pawns is added for each of the four categories.

(A) ADDING ♟♟♟

(1) Add ♟s on c7 and g7 – **41 positions**

Here, the ♔ could not have reached the 8th rank. So for an illegal position, the third ♟ could then be placed on *any* of the unoccupied squares from the second to the seventh ranks (inclusive), a total of S squares given by $S = [(6 \times 8) - 7] = 41$, where 7 is the number of occupied squares prior to the third ♟ being placed. Hence there are 41 different illegal positions associated with this subcategory. Note that in one of the positions there is a ♟ on b3 – a position can be illegal for more than one reason!

(2) Add 2 ♟s on the group of 3 squares a6, a7, and b7 [already occupied] – **41 positions**

Considering legal Pawn moves, both captures and non-captures, there can only ever be a maximum of 2 ♟s on these three 3 squares. The third ♟ can then be placed on any of S squares as in (A)(1). Hence, there are 41 illegal positions (including ♟ on b3).

(3) Add 3 ♟s on the group of 6 squares a5, a6, a7, b6, b7 [already occupied], and c7 – **7 positions**

There can only ever be a maximum of 3 ♟s on these 6 squares. For an illegal position with b7 already occupied in the diagram, the 3 ♟s can be placed upon the 5 remaining squares {a5, a6, a7, b6, c7} in W different ways given by $W=(5\times4)/(2\times1)=10$, the number of *different* groups of three squares selected from five (order *not* being important within a group). Therefore, the number of *new* illegal positions is $10-3=7$ (3 being the number of duplicates already included in (A)(2) above).
Note: The three groups of squares already included in (A)(2) above are {a6, a7, a5}, {a6, a7, b6}, and {a6, a7, c7}.

(4) Add 3 ♟s to the group of 4 squares b7 [already occupied], c7, d7, and c6 – **1 position**

There can only ever be a maximum of 3 ♟s on these 4 squares. There is just 1 illegal position.

(5) Add 3 ♟s to the group of 4 squares d7, e7, f7 [already occupied], and e6 – **1 position**

There can only ever be a maximum of 3 ♟s on these 4 squares. There is only 1 illegal position.

(6) Add 3 ♟s on the group of 4 squares e7, f7 [already occupied], g7, and f6 – **1 position**

There is just 1 illegal position.

(7) Add 3 ♟s on the group of 3 squares g7, h6, and h7 – **1 position**

There is only 1 illegal position.

(8) Add 3 ♟s on the group of 6 squares f7 [already occupied], g6, g7, h5, h6, and h7 – **9 positions**

As in (A)(3), $W=(5\times4)/(2\times1)=10$, so the number of *new* illegal positions is $10-1=9$ (1 being the number of duplicates already included in (A)(7) above).

(9) Add a ♟ on b3 – **526 positions**

Unless another ♟ is added to block the check of the ♝a4, or added so that Black's last move could have been a move by this added ♟ to discover check by the ♝a4, then the position is illegal because White must have been in check with Black to move (the ♝a4 could not have moved there on Black's last move). The number of squares upon which the second ♟ can be added is $S=[(6\times8)-6-9]=33$, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (including of course the ♟ on b3), and 9 is the set of 9 squares {b4, b5, c4, c5, c6, d5, d6, d7, e6} referred to hereafter as SFB (i.e. Squares Forbidden to Black). There are $33-1=32$ squares for the third ♟ (1 is subtracted for the square already occupied in S by the second ♟). Hence the number of illegal positions in this subcategory is $P=(33\times32)/2=528$, division by 2 being necessary because the order in which the second and third ♟s are deposited is irrelevant – in other words, any duplications must be eliminated. The number of *new* illegal positions is, therefore, $528-2=526$, 2 accounting for duplicates already included in (A)(1) and (A)(2) above.

Total for (A): 628 illegal positions

(B) ADDING ♙♙♙

(1) Add ♙s on b2 and f2 – **41 positions**

The ♔ could not have reached the first rank. $S=[(6\times8)-7]=41$ illegal positions (including a ♙ on b3).

(2) Add 3 ♙s on the group of 3 squares a2, a3, and b2 – **1 position**

(3) Add 3 ♙s on the group of 4 unoccupied squares a2, a3, b2, and b3 – **3 positions**

$W=(4\times3\times2)/(3\times2\times1)=4$, hence $4-1=3$ *new* illegal positions (1 being a duplicate already included in (B)(2) above, and all 3 positions having a ♙ on b3).

(4) Add 3 ♙s on the group of 4 squares b2, c2 [already occupied], d2, and c3 – **1 position**

(5) Add 3 ♗s on the group of 4 squares c2 [already occupied], d2, e2, and d3 – **1 position**

(6) Add 3 ♗s on the group of 4 squares e2, f2, g2 [already occupied], and f3 – **1 position**

(7) Add 2 ♗s on the group of squares g2 [already occupied], h2, and h3 – **41 positions**
$S=[(6\times8)-7]=41$ illegal positions (including ♗ on b3).

(8) Add 3 ♗s on the group of 6 squares f2, g2 [already occupied], g3, h1, h2, and h3 – **7 positions**
As in (A)(3), $W=(5\times4)/(2\times1)=10$. So there are $10-3=7$ *new* illegal positions, 3 duplicates already being included in (B)(7) above.

(9) Add a ♗ on b3 – **736 positions**
Unless another ♗ is added to block the check of the ♝a4, then the position is illegal. The number of squares on which the second ♗ can be added is $S=[(6\times8)-6-3]=39$, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (including of course the ♗ on b3), and 3 is the set of 3 squares {b5, c6, d7} referred to hereafter as SFW (i.e. Squares Forbidden to White). Hence the number of illegal positions in this subcategory is $P=(39\times38)/2=741$, division by 2 being necessary because the order in which the second and third ♗s are positioned is unimportant – as always, any duplications must be eliminated. So the total number of *new* illegal positions is $741-5=736$ (5 duplicates already being included in (B)(1), (B)(3), and (B)(7) above).

Total for (B): 832 positions

(C) ADDING ♗♟♟

(1) Add ♟s on c7 and g7 – **41 positions**
As in (A)(1), the ♔ could not have reached the 8th rank. For an illegal position, the remaining ♗ can be placed on any one of $[(6\times8)-7]=41$ squares, where 7 is the number of occupied squares prior to the ♗ being placed. So the number of illegal positions is 41 (including a ♗ on b3).

(2) Add ♟s on a6 and a7 – **41 positions**
There can be a maximum of 2 ♟s on the group of 3 squares {a6, a7, b7}. For an illegal position, the remaining ♗ can be placed on one of $[(6\times8)-7]=41$ squares (including a ♗ on b3).

(3) Add ♗ on b3 – **526 positions**
The first remaining ♟ can be placed on any one of $[(6\times8)-6-9]=33$ squares, where 6 is the number of occupied squares including the ♗b3, and 9 is SFB (see (A)(9) above). Lastly, the second ♟ can be placed on $33-1=32$ squares. Hence the total number of illegal positions arising from this subcategory is $(33\times32)/2=528$, division by 2 being necessary because the order in which the 2 ♟s are placed is not important (i.e. duplications must be eliminated). The number of *new* illegal positions is therefore $528-2=526$, 2 accounting for duplicates already seen in (C)(1) and (C)(2) above.

(4) Add ♟ on b3 – **1254 positions**
This and (D)(4) are the most complicated scenarios. The remaining ♗ can be placed on any one of $[(6\times8)-6-3]=39$ squares, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (including the ♟ on b3), and 3 is SFW (see B(9) above). Next place the remaining ♟. There are two cases:

CASE 1: Here, the ♗ has been placed on one of the 6 squares available to White but not to Black – i.e. SFB minus SFW, all the squares in SFW being in SFB. The 6 squares are {b4, c4, c5, d5, d6, e6} – these being the squares on which a ♟ could have, on its last move, discovered check from the ♝a4. The number of squares upon which the last remaining ♟ can be put is $[(6\times8)-6-9]=33$, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (excluding the occupied SFB square on which the ♟ cannot be placed), and 9 is SFB.

So the number of illegal positions associated with CASE 1 is $6\times33=198$.

CASE 2: Here, the ♙ has *not* been placed on any of the 6 squares {b4, c4, c5, d5, d6, e6} (see CASE 1 above), so the number of squares on which the ♙ can be put is $[(6 \times 8) - 6 - 9] = 33$, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (including the ♟ on b3), and 9 is SFB. (NB: The number of squares upon which the ♙ can be placed in CASE 1 and CASE 2 combined is 39.) So the number of squares on which the last remaining ♟ can be placed is $[(6 \times 8) - 7 - 9] = 32$, where 7 is the number of occupied squares (including both of the added Pawns), and 9 is SFB.

Therefore, the total number of illegal positions associated with CASE 2 is $33 \times 32 = 1056$.

Hence, the total illegal positions for (C)(4) is the sum of CASE 1 and CASE 2: $198 + 1056 = 1254$.

Note: Reversing the above order of the placement of the two remaining Pawns (i.e. first a ♟, then a ♙) adds nothing to the overall solution: it would only introduce duplications.

Total for (C): 1862 positions

(D) ADDING ♙♙♟

(1) Add ♙s on b2 and f2 – **41 positions**

The number of illegal positions is $[(6 \times 8) - 7] = 41$ (including ♟ on b3).

(2) Add 2 ♙s on the 3 squares g2 [already occupied], h2, h3 – **41 positions**

The number of illegal positions is $[(6 \times 8) - 7] = 41$ (including ♟ on b3).

(3) Add ♟ on b3 – **739 positions**

First place one of the ♙s: the number of available squares is $[(6 \times 8) - 6 - 3] = 39$, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (including the ♟ on b3), and 3 is SFW. After placing the remaining ♙ on the board, the number of illegal positions is $(39 \times 38)/2 = 741$. So the number of *new* illegal positions is $741 - 2 = 739$ (2 duplicates already being included in (D)(1) and (D)(2) above).

(4) Add ♙ on b3 – **1254 positions**

Next place the second ♙. There are two cases:

CASE 1: Here, the second ♙ is *not* placed on one of the 6 squares SFB minus SFW, i.e. {b4, c4, c5, d5, d6, e6}; so the total number of squares available for that ♙ is $[(6 \times 8) - 6 - 9] = 33$. Thus the total number of positions associated with CASE 1 is $33 \times 32 = 1056$ (there being no division by 2 because after the second ♙ is placed, a ♟ is put on the board – hence there are no duplications to eliminate).

CASE 2: Here, the second ♙ *is* placed on one of the 6 squares {b4, c4, c5, d5, d6, e6}, the total number of squares on which the ♙ can be placed being, *ipso facto*, 6. The number of squares on which the remaining ♟ can be placed is therefore $[(6 \times 8) - 6 - 9] = 33$, where 6 is the number of occupied squares (excluding the occupied SFB square upon which the ♟ cannot be placed), and 9 is SFB. Thus, the number of illegal positions associated with CASE 2 is $6 \times 33 = 198$, with, as in CASE 1, no division by 2.

Hence, the total illegal positions for (D)(4) is the sum of CASE 1 and CASE 2: $1056 + 198 = 1254$.

(5) Add ♙s on a2 and e2, and add a ♟ on d7 – **1 position**

This subcategory could well be described as the ‘sting in the tail’! This position is illegal because the ♝a4 can be neither the original ♝c8 (which could not have moved from c8), nor can it be a promoted ♟ since it could not have vacated the first rank after promotion to a ♝.

Total for (D): 2076 positions

Total for (A) + (B) + (C) + (D) = 5398 illegal positions

PROBLEM BILLABONG, November/December 2007

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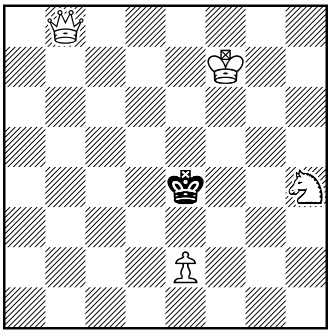
After five years, this is my last session as the caretaker of PROBLEM BILLABONG. From the next issue of *Australian Chess* onwards [from January 2008 renamed *Australasian Chess*], its problem column will be placed in the most able editorial and composerly hands of Geoff Foster (Geoff's contact details are provided [here: Geoff Foster, 20 Allchin Circuit, Kambah ACT 2902, AUSTRALIA; e-mail: < problem.pot@gmail.com >]; do, please, support him well!). Anyway, we open the BILLABONG's final episode for 2007 with two charming miniature 3ers (**87** and **88**), just to whet your solving appetite. David Shire's **89**, a *helpmate in 2* (Black moves first and White mates on his 2nd move, neither side opposing the other), has four distinct solutions from the diagram position. In Arthur's **90**, you are given the situation after Black's 8th move. However, both sides are playing *Monochrome Chess*: each unit can move only to those squares of the same colour upon which it sat in the initial game-array. What was the play? (This is not nearly as complicated as it sounds!) So, as Porky Pig used to squeal, "... That's all, folks!".

87. Niharendu Sikdar (India)

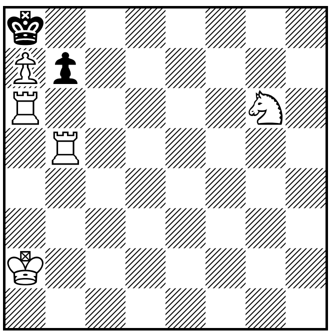


≠3

1.♘f3! (>2.♕e5≠)
1...♚e3 2.♕h2 (zz) ♚e4 3.♕e5≠;
1...♚f5 2.♕g3 (zz) ♚e4 3.♕e5≠;
1...♚d5 2.♕c7 (zz) ♚e4 3.♕e5≠.

Mr Sikdar submitted this problem with the ♔ on e7, but that leads to a *dual continuation* 1...♚d5 2.♕c7 or ♕b5+. Even after repair work (i.e. ♔ to f7), **87** is still marred somewhat by the short threat and repetition of 2...♚e4 3.♕e5≠. Thematically, the ♚'s geometric pattern of initial moves is known as *Y-flights* {ed.}. The give-and-take key allows a different waiting second move for each of the three flights {Andy Sag [S]}. A tick for Sik. I had to use the computer... {Bob Meadley [M]}.

88. Vladimir Kozhakin (Russia)



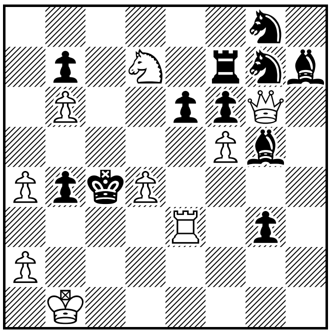
≠3 [3 tries]

1.♘e5? 1...♟b6!
1.♘f4? 1...♟×a6!
1.♖c5? 1...♟×a6!

1.♘e7! (zz)
1...♟×a6 2.♖b8+ ♚×a7 3.♘c6≠;
1...♟b6 2.♘d5 ♚b7 3.♙a8♕≠.

A classy mini for 2007 {M}.

89. **David Shire** (England)

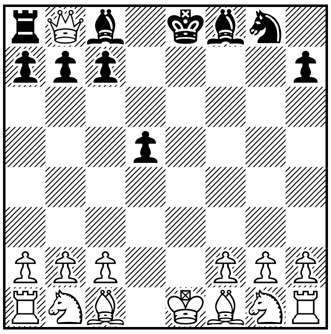


H≠2, 4 solutions

(a) **1.♝×e3 ♕×g3 2.♝×d4 ♕b3≠**;
(b) **1.♜×d7 ♕e8 2.♜×d4 ♕b5≠**;
(c) **1.♞×f5 ♖e5 2.♞×d4 ♖c5≠**;
(d) **1.♟e5 ♕×g7 2.♟×d4 ♕×f7≠**.

In each case a Black unit captures the ♙d4 and self-blocks the ♚ on the second move {S}. Removing ♙d4 is the chore! {M}.

90. **Arthur Willmott** (Australia)



SPG 8, Monochrome Chess

1.♙d4 ♟e5 2.♙×e5 ♟f5
3.♙×f5 ***e.p.*** **♟d5 4.♙×g7 ♝g4**
5.♙×h8♕ ♝×e2 6.♕f6 ♝×d1
7.♕×d8 ♝g4 8.♕×b8 ♝c8.

Black must play 2...♟f7-f5 because a single ♙♟-step without capture is illegal in Monochrome Chess. The resulting *en passant* capture is a popular device in this type of problem {Geoff Foster}. When is a check not a check? ♚ can safely stay on e8 because the promoted ♕ cannot go to any White square including e8! {S}. A check is a check but not in Monochrome? {M}.

[NB: From January 2008, *Australian Chess* magazine was renamed *Australasian Chess*, and the editorship of its problem column (now called “Problem Potpourri” instead of PROBLEM BILLABONG) was handed over to Geoff Foster, 20 Allchin Circuit, Kambah ACT 2902, AUSTRALIA; e-mail: < problem.pot@gmail.com >.]

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INDEX OF COMPOSERS

❶ The numbers of those compositions that have been quoted from other sources are given in **boldface**;
❷ The numbers of those compositions proven to be unsound have been underlined;
❸ The number of a composition that is a version of a work by another composer is given between parentheses – ( );
❹ * denotes a joint composition.

Index of Chess-Composition Themes and Ideas

Some strategic devices – such as unguards, sacrifices, or line-openings – are so commonplace in chess problems that they do not merit a complete listing within this index. Therefore, only those compositions in which any of the following elements either occur as a prominent thematic feature, or are mentioned in a problem's commentary, have been itemized below.

Index of Chess-Composition Genres